

## City Council Special Called Meeting Transcript – 09/18/2019

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And now at 2:21 I'm going to convene Austin city council for a special called meeting. Today is Wednesday, September 18, 2019. Still my dad's birthday.

[Laughter] We have a special called

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meeting to discuss four items that were posted dealing with the challenge of homelessness in our city, we're at 301 west second street in council chambers. The purpose of today's meeting primarily to give us the opportunity to hear from the -- the public. I have been asked to -- to kind of lay out or discuss what was the message board post yesterday that four of us participated in posting. So I'm going to do that quickly. Anybody wants to say any other opening statements or thoughts, we can do that and then we will ask for people to -- to speak. We're going to have one opportunity to speak to the issues cumulatively, so I'm going to call from both

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sign-up lists. As keeping with our rules, the first 20 people will have three minutes to speak. People speaking after that have one minute. You can share time or give time. If you are sharing time or giving time, it will be one minute is the shared time that you can give. So homelessness is a challenge in this city. It's been the highest priority of many people in the community and the stated first priority of the city council for the last couple years. It's a challenge in our city that is increasing. It's certainly one that is becoming more apparent and visible and it's one where I really do believe that we have a critical mass of political will and public will for us to actually

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triumph over. We know what it takes to be successful as a community. We have been able to get to effective zero for veteran homelessness in our community. Having focused resources on that community, we were able to get to that place. We took half of the children and youth in our city that were on our streets off the streets last year. So really it's a question of focus and scaling what we -- what we know works. Obviously the council took some action last June on a couple different items. One of the things that we did in June was to reaffirm that it's against the law and against our ordinances in this city to do things that create a public safety risk or a public health hazard or block, impede access to public ways.

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We reaffirmed that was real important to be part of the law in our city. We wanted our law enforcement to be able to enforce those laws. We also took the ordinance against panhandling, recognized that the courts tell us that you can't stop someone based on what they say. So we took our panhandling ordinance and changed it into an aggressive confrontation ordinance and said you can't aggressively confront someone, threaten them, follow them when they want you to leave them alone regardless of what you are asking for, whether it's money or whether you are asking them for a date. You can't aggressively confront people on our street and that remains as something that is illegal under our ordinances. But we also in June said we need to take another look at those living with us in our

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community as part of our community that are not presenting a public safety risk, not presenting a public health hazard, that are not impeding or blocking or aggressively confronting. There are people that are just experiencing homelessness. At that point in time there were limited places where those folks could be, but we all knew the situation was happening recurrently where we would walk up to those folks and say you can't be here or you can get ticketed or enforcement action against you. And while she was then gathering her stuff up saying please don't arrest me, please don't ticket me, gathering my stuff up, I want to comply, where do you want me to go. We had an insufficient answer to that question. And our answer was all too often I don't know where you should go, I just know you can't be here. What that meant was is that

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she just moved to someplace else that a also she was not -- that she was also not supposed to be. As a community, we know we need to do better than that. We actually have to find better, safer places for people to be. I think there is a shared goal in this community to not have camping, not having anybody that needs to camp, sit or lie anywhere in our city, anywhere. And the goal is we all have that goal and

we all have that vision to get to effective zero homelessness. That doesn't mean there's never any people experiencing homelessness, but what it does mean is that as we find someone that's experiencing homelessness, we can get them into a home within 60 days and get them services right away. That's a federal standard. So we want to get there. The question is how best to get there. How do we get there in the way that best helps people and doesn't compound harms

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and create additional damages. There were some proposals that were posted back in June that we passed and I asked the manager to come back and start identifying places people could and could not be so we could start advancing this ball. I appreciate the work, manager, that came from you. We're now ready to start putting us in a better place. There were two items that were filed separately that created this agenda. One was item 1, the other was item 3. All four of us -- and then each one of those had other -- one was by councilmembers tovo and kitchen, one was by councilmember Casar and myself, other people joined to get the four or five people necessary to put it on the agenda. Since that time, yesterday there was a proposal, kind

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of an outline summary that was published. In part it is responsive to the posting that people have made on the messaging board including councilmembers Flannigan and Ellis, which also raised thoughts. So there's a proposal that has been laid out on the message board that I would imagine will be considered instead of those two other ordinances. And basically it does -- it seeks to accomplish what I think we all want to accomplish, which is let's look at what we did in June where we said we didn't want people to be in unsafe, unhealthy places or creating risks or hazard or impeding and blocking, and let's give that greater detail so there's less uncertainty if there was uncertainty about what it is that is a violation or an unsafe place for people to be so that

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it's really clear both for the community to know, for people engaged in that conduct to know and for all law enforcement people to know. So let's give that greater detail and greater certainty.

>> Renteria: Mayor?

>> Mayor Adler: Yes.

>> Renteria: I would like to say something after you get get through.

>> Mayor Adler: I think it's important that we do that because we don't want anybody to be unsafe facing imminent danger in our community. But the second category that is addressed in this are addressing really the crux of what we're dealing with which is how do we best support and handle people that are in places in our city. How do we get them into better and safer places. So category 2 basically says we're going to really focus resources and attention to getting people from places they are to better and safer places. And as we clear those areas or as we help people

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facilitate people moving from those areas to other places, then we can go back in behind those people and say, okay, no need for other people to be here going forward. So it's an iterative or phased approach that really what we're focusing on in this community is finding people better, safer places to be. And I think that was the focus of the council's action in June and continues to be the focus now. It just adds greater definition to that and greater process to how to procedural go about handling that. Category 3 is the place we want to get to where we can say that we don't -- we don't want anybody to have to camp or lie anywhere in our city. We want to be able to get to effective zero where we can get everyone in our community better, safer place to be.

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Still missing from this approach, I would just say as an aside, manager, is what is the actual action plan to get us from here to there. We have a strategy that was adopted by the community that came from echo, but it doesn't have a specific enough time line or schedule of how we move from one place to another. In June we raised that issue by resolution and asked that your office come back to the community with that time line and with that progress. You have now brought on the strategy officer into the community and I know that that's something that the entire community wants to get just as quickly as we can. But while we're doing that and while that's coming and we would really like to have that yesterday, but as we're doing that, the ordinance

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that I think is in front of us now is one that enables us to clarify the immediate questions that have come up since June. It identifies a couple real focus areas that we can focus on, and it is consistent with the policy in this city that we are no longer just going to continue to move people down the street. Our goal has to be helping people move off the street. And that we recognize that just moving people around the city does not improve their lives or the lives of our -- of our community. There were different alternatives that were presented in the summary that was proposed, so there's still some decisions to

be made on the council if we decide we want to go in this direction. And those alternatives have been laid out in the posting as well. I have never been more hopeful than I am right now

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that our city can actually end homelessness in our city. I'm really excited at that prospect. Our city has one of the top economies in the country right now. If there is a city that ought to be able to do this, it's ours. Finishes I'm proud to be part of a council that's remaining focused on that end result. Councilmember kitchen. And then I'll come back to Mr. Renteria. Sorry.

>> Kitchen: I'll be brief. And thank you, mayor, for -- I wanted to just add a few comments specific to what we are talking about in terms of a phased approach to the ordinance, and that's what was posted on the message board that the mayor just spoke to. So just a few additional comments or actually areas I wanted to emphasize that the mayor mentioned. And that is a couple of things. First off, we do have a shared value and that's to

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connect individuals experiencing homelessness to services and housing. At the same time we recognize the concerns of neighbors and what they are experiencing, which are very real concerns. So the bottom line is we've got to get to a place where we can connect people to housing, but we need to do it in a real way and in a way that is urgent and soon. So I would suggest that in looking at what we've laid out, which we will be discussing in much more detail, that the two items go together, the phased approach and the resolution that's being proposed. The phased approach lays out, as the mayor said, getting to our goal over time, and that goal is to end homelessness effectively in our city, and to start with working our way through the most dangerous places for people to be. So category 1, category 2

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and category 3 are intended to be designed to address areas that present -- that pose the most public health and safety hazards first and work our way through that. So the resolution is important to see because the resolution asks -- the resolution -- I'll let councilmember tovo speak more specifically to that and I will thank her for bringing that forward, but it includes something I think is important which is encampment resolution strategy, and I'll let her speak to that, and that's a critical component to this because it speaks to how we can specifically make this proposal real. And there's some other items in the resolution that speak to how we get there. As the mayor pointed out, none of this is going to happen nor is it going to be real if we don't dedicate the resources and make a commitment to follow this all the way through. In other words, we cannot

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stop with restrictions in certain areas and we cannot stop with allowing camping in certain areas. That doesn't get us the results that we need. We need to -- we have an opportunity right now to say we're going to follow this through to the end, and the end being a place where we can effectively end homelessness. That is going to take us as a council to make a commitment now to the resources that we need and the commitment, to a time line that is realistic but not a long time line, an urgent time line. And so to me the reason that I am hopeful about the phased approach that we have suggested and will have more conversations about, the reason I am hopeful about that is because, in my mind, it has to be done with including that commitment to resources in a time line. This is not a we do the

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phased approach and then maybe we do the stuff that's in the resolution. We have to do them both together. So again, I share the -- thank you, mayor, for laying that out. I am hopeful also. I am hopeful that we will take this opportunity right now to make the commitment that's necessary in order to make a real change. And so there's a lot more in terms of detail that we'll be talking about. There is -- for those of you -- I hope that everyone is familiar with the -- the phased approach and the proposed resolution that councilmember tovo has put out is on the message board, if anyone has difficulties or not quite clear how to look at those documents, please reach out to us or please reach out to our city clerk and we'll be happy to help you with that.

>> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Renteria.

>> Renteria: Yes, mayor, thank you for what you are proposing. You know, I grew up here,

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I'm 69 years old and was raised in east Austin, and I used to go by when I was a child, when I was 8 years old, 7, 8 years old going down to the river, there was no dam here, it was just a river, and we used to call it hobo town. Because that's where the people back then everybody was called a hobo that didn't have a job. Austin was a small, sleepy college town. All the jobs left here during the summer. There was no work, you know, and people lost their homes. I almost got evicted, my family almost did because we didn't have a job back then. Lucky there was a charitable group, the neighborhood corporation that gave us and -- gave us money for rent and to eat. And you know, we had commodity food back then. We had big large cans that

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the government used to give and pounds of flour and beans and rice and that's how I grew up living here. And I had a lot of people that I knew that

[inaudible], but they stayed -- everybody ran them off into the river. When we built the dam that is correct displaced that whole area there and then we moved into the wilderness in the wetlands and that's where they lived at. And that's nothing new. You know, just last April I went and looked at all my Riverside area there and where the students live at, and you could see all that furniture and students when they leave here, they put it out by the dumpsters and you had all these homeless people under our bridge and I went down there and I was just alarmed to see the trash that was left down there. And the only way it got cleaned up was by the rains and the floods that comes

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through Austin in October and in may during the memorial, and it would wash all that off down to -- probably down to bastrop and smithville, most likely. But those are the kind of things that, you know, it was there, it was not there in the streets because they did their campsite. I have various wetlands out there that it's just trashed out by homeless camps out there. And we have these volunteer cleanups that I've gone years after years and clean it all up and see all that plastic and trash out there affecting our wetlands, you know. So it's very important that we address this issue the right way. You know, we did a bond in 1989, house the homeless bond, and the people of Austin rejected it. And I told myself, I said this is going to create a

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big problem here in Austin. And then we started called home mother goose and we got the meanest looking homeless person and said we were going to kill this goose and the citizens of Austin hired a private investigator to look out after that little gosling to make sure he didn't get hurt. That's how -- that's what happened here. So you know, we need to address this issue. You know, they are not going to leave, they are not going to go away. The homeless -- with this kind of economy that's changing so quick, we have people that are making over 100,000 in these high-tech jobs coming here and displacing, you know, that's what is called gentrification. You know, and that's what we're --

>> Mayor Adler: Excuse me. The way we're going to do this is the people that get recognized to speak are going to be able to speak. We don't have people shouting things out. We're going to have to ask people to leave if you want to shout things out because we can't hear the person

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that's been recognized to speak. If you like what someone is saying, the custom in this hall is to show Ms. Houston's jazz hands. Finish, go ahead, councilmember.

>> Renteria: That's what all we're doing is trying to -- to address an issue that is not going to go away. It's been here for a long time, and if we don't address that issue, it's going to become worse. Thank you, mayor.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Let's go ahead and speak to -- go ahead.

>> Tovo: I'll just quickly -- thank you all for being here and participating in this conversation. I will just very, very quickly lay out the resolution and I know unwith of my colleagues asked if we had marked the draft, we didn't, so I'm happy to go through and indicate what sections are new. A lot of it is very -- very much the same to what I posted last week, but it

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does respond to and reflect a phased approach as well as input that we've received from various stakeholders including some of our social service providers. As councilmember kitchen and the mayor discussed, the resolution really supports -- is intended to support the changes that would be affected by the proposed ordinance. As the ordinance changes that we're contemplating today clarify existing provisions with regard to protecting the public health and safety of individuals who are experiencing homelessness as well as the general public, the resolution makes some important commitments. And I think chief among them is that as we continue to affirm our interest in having the police take noncriminal enforcement measures, that individuals who are camping in areas that would become prohibited if the ordinance clarifications pass, those

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individuals will be -- will benefit from connection to shelter and to services. And so the resolution that you have before you today has a provision, a section, a new section outlining the general outline of what that response strategy would be. And it's -- the resolution is now organized, thanks to a lot of hard work from the co-sponsors, it is now organized into several sections, were campment response strategy, emergency shelter, funding and safer camping. The encampment response strategy talks about how our top two priority encampments, being outside the emergency shelter the arch as outside the emergency shelter in downtown Austin, and then the encampment that is underneath Ben white would be the first two priority

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encampments and we would direct resources and staff assistance and the work of social service providers to work with those individuals in encampments to identify and assess their needs. And as appropriate to connect those to emergency shelter either using existing beds at the arch or elsewhere and then connect them to -- from shelter, making sure that that is in line with our other approach, our housing shelter approach would connect those individuals to the kind of case management they require to have permanent housing. So there is that component. We have identified several options for emergency shelter that we would like the manager and his staff to immediately consider and to come back as soon as possible letting us know the feasibility of those possibilities as well as the resources that would be required and where that would fit within -- what sources you would use within our existing budget that we just passed a couple years

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ago. One of those possibilities is the health south building that the city owns. I want to pause here a moment and say this would be -- we have initiated action, the council has initiated action on health south to redevelop it for housing. Primarily for housing that would be attainable for individuals who are working downtown, within the service industry as well as some market rate units. I'm really proud of the action our council took to initiate that development, and this is in no way intended to override that direction. And in fact, I have heard a couple questions about that throughout the day and so it would be my intent, if my co-sponsors agree, that we add language to that effect. I think that's a very important commitment that the council made. This would be for a very temporary use and there's language in here that whatever facility we elected to use, if a facility is the direction we choose to go,

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that it would be with a very hard deadline of a year. Again, as a component of that encampment response strategy. Understanding that -- that the actions we're contemplating are -- are going to impact where people can and cannot camp, the mayor had language that he suggested within our subquorum that's been incorporated into this with regard to providing a guide for members of the public and an education campaign. There is a section about safer camping. This is really just affirming that all of our ordinary regulations that apply to -- that apply to behavior throughout our city remains in force in whether it's a encampment or any other in our city. There are laws that regulate

[2:49:07 PM]

disposal of waste, the extent you can modify public infrastructure, where what you can do to blocking access to benches. That section affirms our existing regulations. And I think I'll leave it there for the moment. It does outline the noncriminal enforcement of measures. One thing, again, as I acknowledged in our first message post, several of these ideas came from you, mayor, and so I just want to acknowledge that some of these ideas, like the one to identify existing encampments that would be appropriate for restroom facilities and others has been retained in here, it's also in the mayor's. So as you just super quickly, as you look through today's resolution, the bulk of the initial -- and for the members of the public, this is posted on the council message board, which is available as a link from

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our main city of Austin page. I've also put some copies right down at the corner of this front row and I've got a few others. If people need a print copy and there aren't enough, I'll ask my staff to bring additional ones down. We have made refinements and edits, but the new sections are the whereas that begin about midway through a page 2, the encampment response strategy is new, the emergency shelter section is new, the funding is, let's say, more elaborate than it was in the initial. There were gestures towards making sure that the manager identified adequate funding. It's now a bit more detailed. The safer camping section is largely the same. It's presented differently in response to some suggestions we had from law. This is the section that incorporates several points that were really good ideas from the mayor about proposing a plan for

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replacement equipment. And then the -- the compliance section is largely the same as it was in the original, it just is, again, expressed a bit differently than it was in the original in part to respond to some of our legal staff's suggestions. So that's a lot of detail. I would just say, again, I appreciate the members of the public who have participated in this conversation. It's a challenging one, as I've said, and we'll probably say again before we finish our deliberations, at the end of the day I hope we can remain laser focused on our end goal of ending homelessness for every one of our neighbors in this community. So regardless of what those ordinances look like, none of us want to see our neighbors camping outside in the doorways and streets of our city. And so I'm really very inspired by the kind of -- the kind of -- the number

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and extent to which people are stepping forward to be -- to be active participants and collaborators and working together to raise the resources to make sure we have a safe and stable place for everybody in

our community to sleep. So thank you. Happy to answer questions if my colleagues have them about the resolution.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Mr. Flannigan.

>> Flannigan: Mayor, I'm sure you are familiar with the phrase lip stick on a pig. I am incredibly frustrated by this process. Nobody wants to see the camping, I don't want to see the camping, my constituents don't want to see the camping. We got to stay focused --

[applause] Stick to this, it will get us through the day faster. Nobody wants to see it, I know you all don't want to see it. But we have to stay focused on how we're going to solve it. I don't believe that we are going to solve this as a

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council, 11 of us inventing policy from the dais. We hired experts to do this for us. Our new homeless strategy officer has been on the job for a week. We need to use the resources that we are creating. We didn't bring a homeless strategy officer from Austin, we brought her from a community where it was working. Where the solutions were being implemented. Where progress was being made. A resolution posted to the message board 45 minutes ago is insufficient for me, insufficient for the public, I think. This is not going to be a problem that's solved overnight and it is not going to be a problem we solve from the dais. I am committed, as we are all committed, to getting this problem managed and not talking about ending homelessness, which is a phrase with a very difficult assessment.

[Applause] Stick to it all, really.

[2:54:12 PM]

But saying what our specific metrics are. Mayor, I'm glad that you brought up the federal definition. A situation where the wait list for housing is 60 days or less. That makes sense to me. That's the type of thing we can make investments to and get to. That's what I want us to get to. The other thing that's important for us to remember as we go through this process, the camping bans are what broke the west coast. They banned camping in certain parts of town which moved it to other parts of town which then moved it to other parts of town and on or about parts of town, and by the time it got so big, there was nowhere left for anybody to be. You couldn't possibly spend enough to solve it. We are not there yet. We are years away from it. But as councilmember Renteria noticed or mentioned, these solutions have been offered to this community in years past and have been rejected. If you want to see crazy

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council meetings, watch video of San Francisco or Los Angeles where they talk about homelessness. Those communities are angry because they should have solved it five, ten years ago. That's what we're going to do. We can develop the end game metric, the 60 days. We can create a middle point metric. I like the idea of a mid point metric as we start to clarify where people can be as we identify where they can be, we are identifying where they can't be, that's what we have to do. That's what I'm committed to do. Exempting certain parts of town and not other parts of town street by street is not something I'm satisfied with. I cannot justify to my constituents how streets from one district are exempted but streets in my district aren't so I don't think we're going to get there. We have allocated the resources, we have made historic investments, we need to rely upon the experts to help us solve this problem.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. I was asked, by the way, this is the international

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sign for disagreement. I was asked for the one for no and the international sign for no is this. No. We want to hear thoughts before we hear people speak. Councilmember Casar.

>> Casar: I'll be brief. Every person in our community housed or not benefits when we try to tackle the issue of homelessness smart and caring. And every person in our community benefits when we protect the civil rights of every single person in our community. I think that that is the past and the work that we've been trying to walk. People on all sides agreed back in June, people from all different angles on this issue agreed back in June the ordinance as we had them before and over 20 years were wrong. Basically existing as a person experiencing homelessness was against the law. You couldn't sleep outside with your stuff, you couldn't sleep in your car without breaking the law.

[2:57:17 PM]

So what we came together and tried to do was to say we want our laws to focus on public health, public safety and making sure everybody has reasonable access to public space no matter who you are. I think we tried to do that. I think we came together around that. This week I think it's important to work on the clarifications to what those things mean that everybody laid out. I think what we have before us is one, clarifications of exactly what those categories mean and two how are we going to do it. What is a clarification, we said you can't block a sidewalk. People in the community have asked what that means. What I put on the message board, you leave four feet of passage. How are we going to do it? I think what we recognize is you say you can't be here, they move. What we posted to the message board I think as a united group yesterday was that we're going to do it by

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offering permanent housing and finally dealing with the problem instead of having spent decades not getting to the root of the issue and instead moving people around. So I think that's what we're united around. I think the votes we'll have to take and some of the information I want to hear from the public is how we write these clarifications. There's alternatives post odd the message board around is it four feet or is it. I think that those are important clarifications and we will just decide those the best that we can as an elected body. But what I think unites us, unites so many people in the room and I think everyone on the dais is that I believe that we are together in knowing that the only way that we fully address this problem is to do the right thing and tackle housing and poverty head on.

>> Mayor Adler: All right. Let's go --

>> Thank you for the opportunity to speak again because I need to clarify the phased approach works, because of the provisions that are in the resolution, and

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so I think it is very important to keep that in mind that if we are -- if we are identifying areas that are going to be prohibited to camping and having those in the second phase or the third phase, there needs to be a strategy for resolving the encampments in those prohibited areas.

>> Tovo: So I would like to the other authors on the document to affirm a that. But council member I appreciate this revision just got posted posted this morning. I know you had another draft available to you this morning as well. I tried identify the areas that are new and the areas that are new are in direct response to the phased in approach because if we are not -- I mean there were concerns about, for example, we have a situation outside of the arch where we have many individuals. There are a lot of interest in making that area safer for the guests at the arch as well as

[3:00:23 PM]

others seeking services in the area. If we move with a prohibition of camping for health and safety reasons we then have a situation where multiple, multiple individuals maybe as opinion as 100 are now in violation of that provision. That is why it is in phase 2. And the plan that council member Casar, kitchen and the mayor brought forward, there these to be -- there needs to be an a outline of what the response and what the action is going to be and that can't be in the ordinance. It had to be in the resolution. So I am not suggesting every member of that four person that brought the plan agree with everything in here but there are components that make the phased in approach work.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Thank you. So we are with going to get to you -- we are going to go ahead and -- in just a moment and hear from the public. The bowl is to -- we have a couple hundred people to hear from.

[3:01:24 PM]

I think we are going to lose some of the council members tonight. One or two. May have to leave the dais but I think we are going to stay here tonight however long it takes to be able to hear from everybody and we are set to come back on Friday morning at 9:00 o'clock and then hopefully Friday morning at 9:00 o'clock we will be able to work our way through and make decisions on both -- on the resolutions of what dash that when we are done hearing from the public --

>> Mayor Adler: You will get that opportunity. So let's go through. Consistent with our rules I am going to try to alternate as best I can someone in favor, someone against. First 20 again get three minutes, thereafter it is one

[3:02:25 PM]

minute, donated time is one minute per donated speaker. Again, this is an emotional issue. We are going to listen to people that are speaking without interfering or interrupting them. I promise you this will go 20 percent more quickly if we are indicating support or nonsupport in a way that enables us to keep moving through speakers. So let's begin. Cleo pat patrocek, you have time donated from Ann love. Is she here?

>> Where is the clicker.

>> Mayor Adler: She has time donated from Ann love. Is Ann love here? No?

>> --

>> Mayor Adler: What about Kristin Smith? Okay. Is Ann love here?

>> Yes.

>> Mayor Adler: Would you raise your hand, please.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Ann love, thank you. Is Kristin dash is Ann love

[3:03:26 PM]

here? Okay.

>> You have four minutes can't you donate my time --

>> Mayor Adler: Would you come up to the clerk and give the clerk your name. You have five minutes. After you begin speaking it is going to be -- hang on. One send.

>> Sorry, sir.

>> Mayor Adler: That's okay. Is Jen sanetz here? Jen sanets? No? What about gale hosell? You are going to be up next. If you will come down to the podium I appreciate that. Go ahead. You have five minutes?

>> My name is Cleo patresek, since you know since I have been here several times I am a former social worker and a daughter of Mexican immigrants. I true up in some Dallas my best

[3:04:27 PM]

friend was shot in the back with when I was 12, when we were walking home from school. I want to thank Austin police and fire department, you are the only thing that stands between us and total bedlam. Here we are again talking about an issue that has united citizens of all ideological backgrounds, those who generally find little common civic cause are able to come together and recognize the misguided and contradictory approach the council has embarked on. Tens of thousands of people are now waking up and showing up here and forming coalitions all across Austin. All to get involved in this mess because apparently council has no intention to represent the citizens. We have been told we shouldn't just move people around but now we must move people away from those important places. We can all see we are not important. That's why we have to be here.

[3:05:27 PM]

There is no enforced definition of what camping is. We all see that the code speaks for allowing anything, trash, drugs, violence, we can all see. Council hides behind law enforcement by making it clear that standards of conduct have been lowered for some people and then pretending that the police have the same leverage to obtain compliance. We can all see --

[ applause ]

>> We are told that children and families are not vulnerable and have no right to feel unsafe. We know better. It is not unreasonable for citizens to demand that all inhabitants abide by basic standards of conduct and that council embody this standard of conduct in an ordinance. It is not unreasonable that citizens expect all streets to be cleaned during productive hours and that people are not passed out in the medians. It is not unreasonable for citizens to oppose shelter locations when the city continually missteps. It is not the citizens who are

[3:06:29 PM]

unreasonable here. It is the council who is unreasonable.

[ Applause ]

>> Can you push play? Can you raise the volume, pl please?

-- Man attacked on sixth street is speaking out tonight. She says her brother willingly became homeless as a result of Austin's new homeless ordinance.

>> Britney, she was shocked to hear about her brother. She really was. Her sister reached out to me after seeing our story on Tuesday. She says Edward is severely mentally ill and his troubles -- but Austin's homeless ordinance has made it easier for him to live on the streets and she was

-- and chooses to stay there.

>> Did you see your brother?

>> Hearing that her brother had attacked a woman on sixth street.

>> On the side of my face and focked me off of my feet on to my back.

>> Came as a shock for Janet Macintosh who lives in Lockhart.

[3:07:31 PM]

Edward Macintosh her brother was booked into the Travis county jail on assault with injury charges.

>> When she assaulted this young lady it broke my heart my brother for no reason unprovoked, attacked her.

>> Janet said says off his medication and in the cycle of drug dick shurchlts my brother is mentally ill. He suffers from paranoid schizophrenia. And bipolar.

>> She says Edwards decided to leave the group home where he was living for life on the streets.

>> He can camp out anywhere he wants to in Austin, something she says was a direct result of Austin's homeless order 0 nance.

>> Go and say, hey, live here. You can come and pitch a tent right here in the city of Austin and you are good to go.

[ Applause ]

>> In addition to reconsidering the city's homeless ordinance, she says she hopes the city will

[3:08:31 PM]

look into more resources for the mentally ill and those who suffer with addiction.

>> People like Edward that have

-- leave their home because now they can, and --

>> You can't let that happen.

>> Hoping the city will --

>> I know you don't care about these people who have to walk home from work or children walking to school Mike to elementary where the 0 encampments and the shelter you proposed propose to place. Look where your votes go and and the talking points you give us a few minutes ago. It is not mutually exclusive to care for this young lady or the countless children, his thick children at that, along the 290 corridor who are now subjected daily to see drug and sex acts and -- >>

>> Mayor Adler: Your time is finished you can finish your thought.

>> Is this camping.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[ Applause ]

>> Mayor Adler: Do you want to come down and speak?

[3:09:31 PM]

>>

[ Applause ]

>> Mayor Adler: What is your name? What is your name, I am sorry?

>> Gail hasell.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Did you have anyone donate time to you?

>> We had some -- online.

>> Mayor Adler: I think you have three minutes. I don't have anyone donating time.

>> Okay. That's fine. First of all my name is gale hasell I moved to Austin in 1972, I graduated from the university of Texas and I taught

-- I am a retired teacher from aisd after close to 30 years. Recently I was on a trip in Mexico and I showed a young man whose father is a waiter and his mother is a maid pictures of the homelessness. He was actually shocked. He asked he, why were people living on the street? He asked me, why was this

[3:10:32 PM]

allowed? And then he asked me, what is our mayor doing about this?

[ Applause ]

>> Our paying money for our homeless problem is not going to solve it without a plan. Look at Los Angeles and other cities that cannot, you know, we cannot ask the citizens of this city for money until you have a solid plan.

[ Applause ]

>> Currently, I am paying more in property taxes than I did on my original house payment. I can't afford to live in Austin. You talking about this home --, you know,, I might be in line. I see many people my age in the same dilemma, they are leaving Austin. Where am I supposed to go? My children, my roots are here in Austin. You need to take a closer look at the budget and consider what these tax hikes are doing to the citizens of Austin like the

[3:11:36 PM]

62 million proposed for this homeless issue. There is no more blank checks. This is a city wide problem. I was recently out here waiting to come in and I am talking to people in south Austin, north Austin, all over talking about the -- how it is affecting their businesses, about walking the streets, the confrontations they have had with these people. By the way, I forgot to mention this, I am a member of take back Austin. It is a group formed here in Austin three weeks ago that has 3,100 members. Three weeks ago. 3,100 members. The first step we need to do is we need reinstate the ordinance we had. I was here.

[ Applause ]

>> I love Austin. I was here when we put in the first ordinance. Okay? And I recall why it was.

[3:12:37 PM]

When you are talking about the pan handlers. I remember channel 36 doing an investigative story and they showed all of this information at the end they told us, they said, don't give to these people. I am seeing other cities that have signs, you know, they tell you, don't give these people money. Give it to the charities. . You know,. We need to work on a plan, not a money pit.

>> Mayor Adler: Ms. Hasell you had time donated from two people I didn't recognize early. Is Terry canter here? No? Ma'am, you can have some more time if someone mere -- is Janice Bremmer here? No. So you have had your time. Thank you very much.

>> Okay.

>> Mayor Adler: Is Gus Pena here?

>> Prosecutes applause.

>> Mayor Adler: Why don't you come on down to the podium. Ma'am, why don't you go ahead and introduce yourself and you have three minutes.

>> Mayor Adler: Did I call your name earlier?

[3:13:37 PM]

>> My name is Lisa Gill Sykes. I live in Austin and a they if the Texas.

>> Mayor Adler: Did I call your name earlier?

>> You did. You said Gail.

>> Mayor Adler: I think that was Gale Hasell who just spoke.

>> Okay. But I also signed up to speak outside where there was a --

>> Mayor Adler: Right. Everyone who is here signed up to speak. I will get to you in just a moment.

>> Okay. Sure thing.

>> Mayor Adler: Yes. Mr. Pena. Why don't you go ahead, sir. You have three minutes.

>> Good afternoon, mayor, city council members, Mr. City manager, Gus Pena, to my right

-- Salazar, she is homeless. I have never bsd you all when I say I have homeless veterans in our organization, veterans for progress. I told my wife of 32 years, I don't want to get jailed so I am going to play it cool.

[3:14:39 PM]

An audit on funds that disburses the funds for homelessness there needs to be an investigation on audit. Mr. Mayor, you keep on continuously saying there are no more homeless veterans in Austin, Texas. Bull!

[ Applause ]

>> Bull!

>> I have counted myself with other members of veterans for progress -- go, Renteria, you didn't get inducted in the military. The issue is this. Don't ever say again that there are no more homeless veterans in Austin, Texas. Now to get back on the issue. An audit on funds need to be disbursed and needs to be done, compliance. 2,200 and 40 homeless veterans net zero, I don't know I don't want to hear net zero any hora. When want to see nobody that has no bodies anymore. Whether they be veterans or

[3:15:41 PM]

civilians. I think the homeless issue started when Bruce Todd was mayor. At that time, we were helping a lot of, you know, veterans also but I will tell you this much, Mr. Mayor. I don't want you or Howard to say anymore, no more homeless veterans, because of net zero. I have bodies that wanted to come here but you know what? They don't want to see you all. I mean, the pretty ladies, they want to see the pretty ladies, but, you know, this is not acceptable to us. Thoo this young lady is going to speak next or further down the line. I signed her up for the issue. Member Nelda spheres, you didn't know who she was. My wife and I were -- still homeless in your camping headquarters. You didn't even know who she was. She said Gus why are you supporting a Republican? I said well, I don't know. He told me he was -- you know, a Democrat. But she said, Gus, make sure

[3:16:43 PM]

that they talk good about helping the homeless veterans. Even back then, we were having homeless veterans issues. So I don't want to hear anybody, nobody say no more homeless veterans in Austin, Texas. That is wrong. But I want something concrete for the people that are out there. There are a lot of good people out there. That are out there homeless. Yes she dresses nice but she is homeless. The issue is this. We are failing the system. Society's worth is failing the system for the people. I would say maybe -- I will wrap it up.

>> Mayor Adler: Time is up.

>> 40,000 people --

>> Mayor Adler: I want to give Ms. Salazar a chance to speak.

>> This is not appropriate department of your job, Mr. Mayor.

>> Mayor Adler:.

>> Do your job, Mr. Mayor and all of you also!

[ Cheers and applause ]

>> Mayor Adler: Ms. Sal Dar -- Ms. Salazar, did you want to speak?

>> Yes.

>> Mayor Adler: You have three minutes.

>> -- Is going to be the next speaker at this podium. Okay. Go ahead. You have three minutes.

[3:17:43 PM]

>> Yes, sir. Thank you. I am a homeless individual here. Unfortunately, I went to the arch to receive services and as I was told that I was not considered chronically homeless, therefore I did not qualify or meet the criteria for any services from the arch, including just a simple bus pass. And at times a shower or to use the restroom there. The system is fractured. They want -- you -- they want to meet the criteria of multiple years of homelessness before the arch is willing to assist you. I was paying taxes. I was working. There are many of us like myself in this situation, simple showers by 5:00 A.M., somewhere to store our items, storage containers, which is not expensive, I am sure. I have an outline of ideas that me and other homeless individuals have come up with, affordable transportation. What happens after the band-aid of temporary shelter at a

[3:18:45 PM]

shelter, bed for what, three months? What happens after that? Single resident occupancies, the homes are drug confiscations and homes taken away from those who don't pay taxes. Utilize those homes to help alleviate the homelessness program and that will weed out the people who no longer want to be homeless and are willing to work and become taxpaying citizens versus the ones that want to sell drugs and break the law. Let the criminal justice system take care of those individuals and the people like myself that want to work that can't even get the help there -- for a bus pass from the arch. So where is this money going? The citizens have so graciously given of their hard earned money for people like me that want to get off the street and not be homeless. Give us a solution. Showers at a decent hour so we can look for work, somewhere to store our items, a storage facility, where we don't lose our important documents and pictures of our children,

[3:19:45 PM]

laptops and electronics we worked hard so they don't get stolen. Transportation. Bus passes. How are you going to tell me I am not chronically homeless? Be homeless one day and tell me it is not chronic. It is a horrible place to be. Especially when I had a home and a bed and a job. Let's help each other. We are all Austin. Let's not let it turn into skid row Los Angeles. Please, it is a beautiful city with wonderful people. I have ideas that have come about from other homeless individuals. We have ideas. May we work with you, please I will outline these ideas and be more than happy to hand the ideas out. Very simple things. Something beyond the shelter. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much.

>> Thank you for the time.

[ Applause ]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Mr. MC-- you have some time that is donated from two people. Is Gary madly here? Gary manly? No? What about Jennifer bartino?

[3:20:49 PM]

Jennifer bartino here? Mr. Mckodiak you have three minutes. Chris Harris is on deck.

>> Thank you, mayor. Thank you, council. I am here today on behalf of save Austin now on the 31,000 people who have signed our petition to rescind the homeless ordinance changes that you all

-- that nine of you saw fit to put into place. In policy has been a disaster. It lab an absolute disaster for our city and I say that more in sadness than anything else. I don't doubt your intentions. I said this when I was here last time. The intention of trying to decriminalize homeless existence was a noble one. Unfortunately, you made our city less safe and today you are admitting it. You admitting it because you are deciding to identify six streets in our city where people cannot camp if they are homeless. On the basis that it is bad for public safety and bad for public health. So for people who live and work on toes streets, they are apparently worth more than everyone else who lives in Austin.

[3:21:49 PM]

[ Applause ] ..

>> The problem is, the homeless people who are camping on those streets are going to move to other streets so every other street in our city, every other neighborhood in this city is less safe because you have cherrypicked six streets and decided to make them safe there homeless camping. What is the solution? I want to end homelessness, absolutely. We need identify people who have drug and alcohol problems and get them treatment and get them off the street. Those with mental health problems get them treatment and get them off the streets. Everyone else needs to be on a apartment to work and self-sufficiency. You are seeking this in the entirely wrong way in June the greater Austin crime commission and police organization begged you wait to be thoughtful about this.

[ Applause ]

>> To not do it in June, going on vacation for five weeks, leave the police department, the fire department and the residents to deal with the mess you created.

[ Applause ]

>> You went ahead, nine of you

[3:22:50 PM]

went ahead. I will note two of you voted against it at the time, neither of you went forward and it has been an absolute mess for our city and now you are admitting that you are basically admitting that you 0 may not say it but admitting that and trying change a this ordinance today. And so to be honest 0 with you I am actually not sure I prefer these changes or not because the preference that I have as someone who is speaking on behalf of 31,000 people who signed our petition is to go back to where we were, knot that is a solution and doing fix the problem, but you have played the problem worse in the interim. If \$30 million didn't solve our homeless problem year after year after year, how is \$62 million going to solve? It we need a plan -- I would also lastly say, part of why people are homeless is that it is intensive to live in Austin.

[ Applause ]

>> And you all are making that worse. Tabling the maximum property tax increase this year of eight percent. How many homeless people is that going to create? All of 0 these problems are

[3:23:51 PM]

connected. So just -- I will wrap up by saying you have an opportunity today to stop this insan sphwhrie thank you very much.

>> Go back to where we were before and place a real plan together and spend your money devicely. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much.

[ Cheers and applause ]

>> Mayor Adler: Is Darren rekovic here? No? What about Darren rakovic? Is Darren Reykjavik here? How about Susan Albertson? Why don't you come on down to this podium. You have time donated from two people, is Leighton Rogers here? No? Leighton Rogers? What about robin fox? No?

>> Robin fox is here.

>> Mayor Adler: Would you stand up, please? Thank you. You have four minutes. You have three minutes, sir. You had time that was donated as well. You have time donated from Margaret brook shire. Is Margaret brook shire here?

[3:24:52 PM]

You are standing, thank you .. What about Scott Budke, great, thank you. You will have five minutes. You have five minutes, go ahead.

>> Thank you. Thank you very much for the time. My name is Chris Harris. First I want to thank you all for to the courageous action you all took in June protecting and representing and acting on behalf of the most marginalized in our community, that's a courageous act and you deserve credit for that. This is about winners and losers, and what I share lot of folks 0 here -- -- they are a different type or set or brand of people and it is wrong. It is straight up wrong. Every single person that lives in this city is a citizen of the city.

[3:25:52 PM]

Every single person is a person that deserves respect. I heard complaints about rising cost of living in this city. It is difficult and that's all the more reason to have empathy. There but for I there but for the grace there goes I. I may be the person on the street and I sure don't want the police coming to wake me up every night out of my sleep pause I have nowhere else to government it is wrong. It is wrong, it is wrong. So we need -- there are solutions to homelessness. Houston cut their homeless population by 54 percent. Other cities have shown you can do it with a housing first solution and I applaud the steps you taking to implement that sort of solution in our city. We do not agree with a any new restrictions on where folks are able to camp and sit and line our city because public property is all of our property and we all have a right -- we all have a right to live equally. There is no evidence that the --

[3:26:54 PM]

despite the one off that the opposition will bring that crime increased in our city, that homelessness is responsible for it. There is -- they are merely anecdotes.

>> That's fine, that's fine. People experiencing homelessness deserve respect and dignity as much as anyone else and they don't deserve the law on them for just trying to get by and we know -- and we know that the changes that you all made did not make other things legal. They did not make the other behaviors and assault and other things that people are trying to bring up legal. You took no authority away from the police to address those issues and we know that. And so I want to just nip all the falsehoods and a miss information in the bud and again say that a we support your commitment that I see represented in the drafts as they continue moving forward to end homelessness, to not put new restrictions in place until we reached a functional end of homelessness and we do not support new restrictions we do support the work you are doing

[3:27:54 PM]

and agree that there is now a new commitment from you all and we should give it the time and opportunity to work and ultimately we all want the same thing is people not forced to live on the

streets. We want our streets to be safe and sanitary. We want everyone to have a place in the city that they can afford and to be able to live here with dignity and freedom. And I support the efforts that you all are taking in order to support that many situation and vision for our city and thank you so much for the time.

[ Applause ]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Ms. Albertson you have four minutes, I think because you had one person that was here.

>> Yes.

>> Mayor Adler: Emily Eric. Why don't you come to the next podium. Go ahead, you have four minutes.

>> I am against allowing camping anywhere. The entire camping ordinance needs to be rescinded now. First of all I want to say I have nothing against hopeless people. My little brother is a homeless drug addict and I love that one. I honestly feel if the laws weren't so lenient that he and

[3:28:55 PM]

his pregnant girlfriend might come home or go into rehab. Right now they are camping at a Wal-Mart. I fear my baby niece will be born add distributed to crack, heroin or alternative but that's nothy I am here today. I am a small business owner Austin, and I have storefronts

-- both locations are seeing a dramatic increase in transient crime, including vandalism at my property, every morning I pick up their trash, including needles, a drug kit, alcohol %-@bottles, personal belongings, et cetera. I had one peeing on my front porch for about a week. They use drugs in my bathroom and they really make a mess of it. They verbally attack my employees and clients. They pass out inside of my office and outside in my yard. They scream and cuss at everything or nothing but that's not why I am here today. By allowing transients to camp anywhere you have ruined Austin for future generations. Austin is no longer a pretty city. Everybody in Austin a is talking about the camps and the rash

[3:29:55 PM]

everywhere. There is pictures of human feces and transient masturbating all over social media, but that's not why I am here today. The reason I am here today is because of my daughter. She attending the Steve hicks school of social work at the university of Texas. She writes -- every day and in the evening, she lives in a first floor apartment near Ben white and men comak -- currently 100 registered sex offenders listed as transients and living on the street of Austin because you allowed them to street anywhere, they can now sleep 100 feet from my daughter's bedroom window and front door. Neither of your ridiculous camping plans will stop registered sex offenders from walking 100 eat from their bed to peak in through my daughter's mini blinds while masturbating, the only way to stop this is is to rescind

the entire camping ordinance now. Because you have put my daughter's safety at risk I will not stop fighting until the entire camping ordinance is

[3:30:56 PM]

repealed or every 0 -- or until enough of you all are removed from your positions and there are enough people --

[ cheers and applause ]

>> -- Sitting in those seats who care about the residents of Austin. You will never end homelessness, transients are coming from all over the United States and Texas to Austin a if you say they are not, you are very ill informed, especially you, mayor adder her. You quoted California governor new some and -- at the meeting at UT last month. You laughed at the fact that you blamed the homeless problem -- look at me. You laughed at the fact that -- blamed his homeless problem on Texas. What you failed to laugh at is the fact that by 2018 the state of California has already bussed 827 transients to Texas. Seattle is now going to pay to bus transients anywhere they want to go. They are going to be coming to, coming to Austin, why? Because the winters are mild here, the transient mass exodus

[3:31:56 PM]

from the entire west coast to Austin this fall will be more 0 than any city can handle. We used to feel safe in Austin a and don't you dare blame any of this on Austin police. Austin police officers are risking their lives to keep us safe. You have decreased their ability to do that. You are saying it's okay to camp here and here but not there or there, the ordinance is ridiculous and a waste of officer's time trying to enforce. And the amount of time you are spending on your idiotic ordinance will take resources away from other mrrtle I could go on and on 0 about how you all have ruined Austin but I don't have time for that. 2019 will two down in history as a year mayor Adler and the city council ruined Austin a.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much.

>> Thank you.

[ Cheers and applause ]

>> Mayor Adler: Is April Smith here? Is April Smith here? April Smith? Is April Smith here? No? I am sorry.

[3:32:59 PM]

April Smith. I am sorry. Is Susan spatara here. Why don't you come down and be next. You have time donated by Janette dianavich, thank you, and Betty Rogers. Is Betty Rogers here. So you will have five minutes. And then Ms. Garrick, you had time that was donated by Catherine dire, is Catherine dyer here? You have four minutes. Please go ahead.

>> Thank you, member and council members. My name is Emily dyer, staff attorney at the -- project. I have heard a lot of misinformation in here and let's set the record straight and take a moment to reflect on why we had to change the order 00 nances and decriminalize homelessness in 0 Austin in the first place. The reason that we had to do this was not just because it was counterproductive and inhumane but actually was unconstitutional and the reason it was unconstitutional was because it violated the eighth

[3:33:59 PM]

amendments prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment because it criminalized the status of being homeless. You can't do that. That goes against Austin's values and it is illegal and courts have found that it violates the eighth amendment. It is not something that Austin should be doing. And it also, as I said is counterproductive. People -- we are representing people who are being trapped in this horrible cycle when you criminalize homelessness it doesn't help anything and make people want to be less homeless. People already want to be housed. What it did was it made it so people were afraid living in fear, they had warrants they couldn't clear, they couldn't get a job, they couldn't get housing, they had criminal records because of these ordinances. And it actually trapped them in homelessness and made it harder to escape homelessness because it created barriers to housing and employment. It was just plain inhumane. I also want to point out that a we are with talking about crimes and homeless people are very, very vulnerable, far more vulnerable than housed people

[3:34:59 PM]

and more likely to be the victims of crimes than they are to commit crimes. Far more likely. And I think that some of the fear mongering that happened since the ordinances were changed has actually increased targeted violence against homeless people and I think a lot of the rhetoric you are hearing today has done that. There have been people who have literally been bombed for being homeless and have had anti-homeless messages thrown at them with those firecrackers that were bombing them and people could have been killed. I also want to point out that the ordinances we are creating very dangerous situations for people. We have members of our coalition, of the -- coalition who you have heard about who because of are afraid to getting tickets or driven into more add more dangerous areas of Austin who are actually being hunted down in the woods and were being told to hide better. So they would go into creek beds and sleep there so they wouldn't be targeted and criminalized and

[3:35:59 PM]

actually almost drowned on several occasions. When it rained and so decriminalizing homelessness is a matter of life and death for a lot of people. I really urge you not to go backwards. You have committed to have investing so many resources to a solve this problem and as council member Flannigan said, we just had a homeless strategy officer start. We are just committed to investing resources to helping people and getting them off the streets and that's the way to go, not telling them your existence is criminalized and trying to push them away from the public eye and into more dangerous areas. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Is Lauren Ortell here? And then I think you have some time that has been donated from crystal, Eric and Collins. Yes? Okay. So you will have four minutes in a moment. I think you had five minutes. Thank you.

[3:37:02 PM]

Susan Spataro. You know, you all were elected to -- I mean, you don't own Austin. We 11ed you to the protect our town, to have people be safe for it to be healthy and safe to drive your car to an intersection, have your granddaughter try to walk to a job without being offended or assaulted by anyone, whether they are homeless or not. And, you know, this is Austin. We are the capital of Texas and what you have done to this community is a dispraise. I don't know how else to say it.

[ Applause ]

>> People who are visiting here are telling you they are not coming back because it is like a cesspool downtown. This should bother you and it bothers me, but you know what? They are also not going to come back for other events and pay sales taxes and next budget cycle you will be saying gee sales taxes are down.

[3:38:03 PM]

Visitors will not come here with what you have created. And you have created it in June. It was not necessary. So the reality is that change in criminalization did not have to happen. I have gone to power seminars on this and heard what many of you have to say. And you keep saying over and over well all of these criminal acts, the lewd behavior, the masturbating in public, it is all illegal, but it is happening all the time. Then fix it. If you think you can fix it, do it. I don't want to drive to an intersection, people who came today drove to an intersection where people are exposing themselves to them or banging on the windshield if they won't give them money. They are going to commit a lewd act. Stop it, then. If you can control that, stop it. The get a cop at every enter section if that's what it takes but it is unacceptable for people to live in this town with the situation that you have

[3:39:05 PM]

created. To the filth on the street it is inexcusable. If you think it is okay or them to live on the street and urinate and defecate on the street, then get city crews there every single morning and clean it up. So that when people --

[ applause ]

>> When people shop or try to do business in Austin, Texas they are not facing that. So if you can control that, you should. I don't think you can control it. Should we handle and take care of homelessness? Of course. But the truth of the matter is, there are a lot of reasons people are homeless and some are not good reasons. But I don't understand why you couldn't, for instance, move the ones that are on the street now to St. John's, Home Depot, that's a part the city owns, get services there, analyze why they are there. Those that need jobs, drug treatment or whatever, get them off the streets, you don't have the crime and take care of those problems. Mr. Pena says said do an audit

[3:40:06 PM]

of the money. I agree with that. That amount of money that is being spent on this and now we are saying we have a crisis here that you don't know how to handle. I think it is not right. I am very upset about the shelter in south Austin, because it is within viewing distance of an elementary school. What kind of search did that?

[ Cheers and applause ]

>> So we are saying, elementary school children should be there and you say, and I know you mean it, oh, we won't let any bad stuff happen there. Really? Really? What is the arch like? You know how you are solving that? You are narrowing the sidewalk. I mean, that's how you are solving the arch problem? And I mean, it is funny but it is not. And that's how you are going to take care of the families and children that live there? I agree with you, Mr. Flannigan, and that is all people and all streets are sacrosanct and that

[3:41:08 PM]

there should not be this kind of camping on any streets in Austin, Texas. And I think you should look to a safe facility and I think the St. John's -- it is a big one, and move people there so they can store their things, we shouldn't be taking their things, and then restoring order in this town. I don't think you understand how unhappy this is, the citizens of Austin, Texas are today and this isn't -- this is not partisan politics. It is not age. It is not how much money you make. It is what has happened to our town?

Many people in south Austin, like three I know already moved out. They don't want to live in Austin, Texas anymore if this is what it is like. We did not elect you to do that.

[ Applause ] So I ask you to work on the homeless O I don't think anyone disagrees with that.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Thank you.

[3:42:10 PM]

[ Applause ]

>> Mayor Adler: Mr. Casar. >>

>> Casar: I meant to ask Ms. Garrick a question when she was done testifying and she cycled back in, Ms. Garrick, sorry. I have been working hard on a variety of drafts on the message board, different alternatives. Can you --

>> Mayor Adler: Hey, hey at that -- what -- council members have the prerogative to call anybody up they want to. Go ahead.

>> Casar: So my very brief question because obviously there are a lot of folks who want to talk is, of the alternatives that that have been posted and posed which ones -- we have been to keep them narrow so they are nondiscriminatory but protect public safety. Really briefly can you -- I think you radio out out of time and lay out which one of those you, in your view --

>> Yes. Thank you. Councilman Casar. I think the version Wes have seen from you, the mayor and council in regards to councilman Renteria, those versions I at this do a pretty good job of

[3:43:13 PM]

clarifying ordinance you have in place. I think the ordinances, the ordinance that was passed on June 21st made it so that camping in a cankerous, dangerous rare -- impede the reasonable use of public property is illegal. Aall thought that was fairly clear and covers all of the issues that have been brought up. But if Austin police department would like more clarification I think we are fine with that. And I think those versions that are being shared now do a good job of clarifying things like camping in the middle of a roadway would be dangerous, for example. And impeding of camping on a sidewalk in a way that doesn't leave room for people to walk through or people have disabilities to be getting through would be impeding the use of public property for pokes. I think that place is already covered in the current versions

[3:44:13 PM]

of the ordinances but we will clarify those points.

>> Mayor Adler: Bill Bryce. Thank you. Is bill Bryce here? You have some time donated by Julie Fitch. Is she here? If you will come up to this podium, please. You will have four minutes. Go ahead. You have -- you have three minutes. Rather. Did you have people that donated time.

>> Crystal --

>> Mayor Adler: That's right. Four minutes.

>> Okay. Good afternoon, my name is Lauren Ortell and I agree basically everyone in this room that we need better solutions but today we are talking specifically about the ordinance and these proposals to roll back the ordinance. I hear people worried about safety but I hope they all keep in mind that people without homes face more dangers and threats than the rest of us could ever imagine. We need to be clear about what the ordinance changes were, aggressive or threatening behavior has not been sanctioned. It is still illegal to threaten people, block passageways or

[3:45:14 PM]

harass customers going into businesses, aggressive panhandling is also illegal, that means if anyone so legitimately causing danger for you, your options have not changed. We do not need to see any new restrictions on camping, sitting or lying, we are talking about people's right to exist in the only way they can. Until our city can provide afford can believe housing options for everyone. We will only achieve safety when we take care of people. We can never police our way out of our problems. I hope you will put people first and make the right decision to stand behind the progress made a few months ago. I appreciate your time. There is a brief video from the community. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Are you starting the video?

>> Thank you.

[3:46:15 PM]

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♪♪ many of us in Austin are barely making ends meet and thousands have fallen through cracks. After years of community advocacy, Austin city council took courageous action a to change ordinances that targeted people experiencing homelessness for things as basic as sitting, sleeping or asking for help. Before these changes were made, many of our homeless neighbors were forced into hiding. Most people had no choice but to sleep in the woods, in waterways or other dangerous locations. After the ordinances changed we have seen more and more people sleeping in public across the city. This has caused a lot of

[3:47:18 PM]

anti-homeless backlash, including a tax on our homeless neighbors. Attacks on our homeless neighbors. The majority of the conversation seems to be directed at the public resentment of people being more visible than they had been before a. So why were these changes made? Because criminalizing every day behavior means people in poverty are being fined with tickets they could not pay. The majority of those unpaid tickets turned into arrest warrants. Having an arrest warrant on your record makes it difficult if not impossible to get a job, housing or receive necessary services to get back on your feet. This created a lose-lose cycle for each one without a highways. These barriers made addressing the root causes of the issue much harder to treat. When rents are high and wages are low, the results that many of us end up walking a financial tightrope every day. The most common causes of homelessness are job loss 0 and evictions and the majority of

[3:48:18 PM]

people experiencing homelessness live on the street for two years or less. When people are struggling to get by tickets for sitting, sleeping or asking for people can make the difference between being homeless for a few days, a few months or a few years. We as homes dots handcuffs we need make things as easy as possible for people to get back on their feet, changing these ordinances won't solve homelessness but criminalizing every day needs of our homeless neighbors was making matters much worse. Adjusting these ordinances to focus on dangerous or unsafe activity means we can --

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. That's all. Thank you. Stop that.

>> -- Real solutns.

>> Mayor Adler: Stop that. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much.

-- Is -- Wilson here? Is Leonard Wilson here? Leonard Wilson? No. What about Melissa sa. This, santellano?

[3:49:18 PM]

No? About Timothy altenaro? No? What about Leann land? Why don't you come on down. You have time donated from Mary carlet. Is she sneer yes. Okay. You will have four minutes. You have four minutes.

>> Thank you, mayor. Good afternoon, mayor. I am bill Bryce and represent the downtown alliance staff and acknowledging the council's efforts to add clarity to the ordinances that were amended back in 1 but also to implement reasonable restrictions on where people can and cannot sit, lie and ghamp public places. I would like to frame this in three rays, what we support what we request and what we believe. We support restrictions under the amendment proposed by council members tovo and kitchen that would restrict camping on sidewalks anywhere in the city. We believe that this is clear to the public and to the police from an enforcement standpoint. We it is 0 support a number of recommendations that appear on both of the proposed amendments,

[3:50:18 PM]

these include camping in dangerous areas, such as near highways or in flood prone areas such as creeks and rivers, restrictions on camping and sitting in line in proximity to social service centers and shelters and distances from doorways that are decimated. We also agree that Austin police department should first give a person the opportunity to change their behavior, their violating behavior and also when it is appropriate to call another resources that might be helpful to address the person's needs but I would offer that these resources currently are not always available at the times the police are encountering folks experiencing homelessness or violating these ordinances. Downtown Austin alliance would request any amendment include a restriction on camping, sitting or lying in front of any open business. We believe this too would add clarity to the ordinance both for people, the public in general as well as the police department. Lastly I would say that reflecting on the comments many of you made leading up to

[3:51:21 PM]

today's public comment, changing the ordinances won't solve homelessness, we recognize that, that's not what the ordinances were ever intended to do. They are tools to maintain public order. Our focus, however, must be intensified on solving this problem. Three months ago you called out a resolution 184 many, many different directions to the city manager, part part of which involved coming back with a reasonable recommendations on restrictions to these ordinances. But we need to have immediate, immediate intensity on standing up new shelter, standing up tell rare and permanent housing or this problem will never be solved, we will be sitting here again talking about this time and time again. We

have got to solve it but we have got to hold people accountable to making sure that we are making progress to get more shelter housing and services stood up as quickly as possible. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Is Anna defredes here? And you have time donated from Peter Martinelli.

[3:52:22 PM]

Is Peter here? Peter Martinelli? No? You will have three minutes. Okay? Go ahead. Mr. Provides, we have a question for you.

>> Thanks, Mr. Bryce, for coming back up. Over here.

>> Sorry.

>> Council member.

>> And I want to thank the downtown Austin alliance or the vigorous activity and involvement in this issue.

>> You're welcome. Thank you.

>> I was curious, you used in one of your points you talked about when businesses are open, about people camping in front of the business when it is open. Do you mean just operating hours open or the business itself is active?

>> Thank you for the clarification. When the business is active, I I think it is important to recognize that for example, when restaurants are setting up when they have

[3:53:23 PM]

outdoor cafes, the business may not be open for business at that time, but their employees are actively moving around and we see this on congress avenue where we have a number of sidewalk cafes, for example, probe half an hour to an hour before the business is actually open if not longer the employees are moving out of the storefront, setting up tables, chairs, cleanup so we believe those restrictions should apply at the time the business is operating, perhaps not open for business in terms of accepting customers but I appreciate your point of clarification.

>> So I can see where that could cause some differences in timing, based on when a particular restaurant may be open and when they open for prep and so forth, so I am not going to pursue that point here now because we have got a lot of pokes toly listen to but I wanted to work through that specific in my head and then the other piece was, granted on the restaurants and preparatory time considered open time, what about an office complex or an office building say on congress that

[3:54:24 PM]

may close when everybody goes home at say 7:00 o'clock at night and those stores are closed?

>> I don't have an exact answer to that question, I advertise a good one, though, I think a lot of the office buildings are open 24/7.

>> Okay.

>> Or thereabouts. So I think that we would have to think through how that might be measured or a metric could be set to accommodate that.

>> And I will just say, just generally I think the congress after a knew is one of to streets that is considered outside 0 of to bounds as a limiting area and the tovo kitchen proposal I am a cosponsor for but my use is congressman as a proxy not that I want to say anything about that limitation in the proposal. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Is chazz Moore here? You will be at this podium. Just a moment. Go ahead.

>> Okay. Before I start I guarantee you I will see some of this from both sides because I am going to try to take a moderate, because I render a rot I will say --

[3:55:25 PM]

anyway, good afternoon, mayor and city council. I name is Leann land and I represent western trails neighborhood and of course we are pretty much at ground zero for -- which I think are two of the worst sites in south Austin. Anyway, we witnessed violence, people drinking, doing and selling drugs in public, including Jocelyn park, which is next to an elementary school where the students play every day. We along with our children all too frequently see lewd and disgusting behavior it is not safe because of these things, not to mention that, you know, with the needles and waste it is just not a good situation. So I do believe that we need to help the homeless who do want help. But what about the children, neighbors and families in my neighborhood who don't feel safe to walk to local businesses or

[3:56:25 PM]

take their kids to the playground at the neighborhood park? Where is the concern for the people that live near the encampments and a of course there have been some mod situations I feel like those are being addressed. And I have to say, I have a blessed life and I am willing to pay extra to help em that are less fortunate than myself. Anyway, I think real problem, though, for what I am seeing is it is coming from the top down. Yesterday one of my neighbors and I actually went to visit with the folks under Ben

white and -- the pass. And after an hour and a half it was clear to us that those cash that do not have a roof over their head and, you know, go to sleep with empty stomachs at night, these homeless people, they feel that they have been left out 0 too. We spoke to several people and

[3:57:27 PM]

these people are -- they are articulate, they are smart, some of them are try to -- some of them are trying to help themselves and we all acknowledge that there are those bad elements in all facets of society. And so I know they don't feel safe down there. You know, whereas we are kind of frightened of what might be down there. They are frightened as well. But what I heard too is they are scared of any shelter. I asked them how they felt about and if they heard about the new shelter. I didn't meet anybody that said, I can't wait. I am -- they are afraid of them and it is because of, you know, some just don't want to be Cobb confined but they are scared of the people that, you know, are out to hurt anyone. So anyway, I just think that I would hope that you would listen to the taxpayers as well as the homeless folks -- so anyway.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >>

>> Mayor Adler:

[3:58:28 PM]

Councilmember kitchen.

>> Kitchen: Ms. Lynn, did you need to finish your thought or finish what you were going to say?

>> Oh, I just -- it was really eye opening yesterday to meet with these folks and I think we need to realize that a lot of them really just want help finding housing. And, like, I've got the name of a woman and I don't understand why I didn't hear more services are going out to them. What's to keep those folks from saying, okay, this woman wants housing, she really wants it so why can't be get on a list or somebody helping her now? I don't understand why there would be any restrictions to that. We have 12 or more dozens of organizations ready to help these folks, but I didn't find anyone who said, hey, yeah, somebody has reached out. They said, you were the first two people to come down and talk to us as people, and we shook their hands, we listened to them and I have an interview of one of the women I'll post

[3:59:29 PM]

and send to each of you. She said don't use it other -- I said I would like to share it with city council and no one else and I don't use her name. There are people down there that want help and they are afraid of the others that don't.

>> Kitchen: Let me say two things. One of the things that councilmember tovo talked about was our encampment response strategy which recognizes the concerns under Ben white and recognizes the need to focus resources to do exactly what you just said in terms of working with folks under that area to get them connected to services in a very targeted, urgent and focused way. The second thing I just want to say is I want to thank you and other folks in your neighborhood for -- you know, for working really hard with us to try to come up with solutions so thank you.

>> I appreciate your help any time. If there is anything I can do, I'm available.

[4:00:29 PM]

>> Mayor Adler: Councilmember tovo.

>> Tovo: Thank you, and I just wanted to point out if that individual wants her video kept private, probably don't share it with the city council because it would make it subject to a public information request. So I appreciate her willingness to share that testimony, but it does become public once we receive it. So I just wanted you to have that information.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Is Christian cabalero here?

>> Yes.

>> Mayor Adler: You have time donated from Mary mergler.

>> Is this on? Anna had to go to the bathroom so we're switching. I didn't mean to put that on public record.

[Laughter] I think I had time donated from a few people.

>> Mayor Adler: Let me see here real fast.

>> If not, that's fine.

>> Mayor Adler: I don't

[4:01:29 PM]

have you --

>> Eye get in and out. With Austin justice coalition, and I think I would really like to turn around and talk to the people behind me because I think this is -- and I want people to keep in mind I'm black in a city

that used to be one in 13 black, now it's one in three. We only make up 7.5, 7.6% of the city, but make up 43% of the homeless population where in a school district, black boys in particular are failing for, like, in every field of academia and pre-k through 12. But I'm most disappointed more than ever in this city because this issue has divided us in ways that I've never seen since I've been here. I'm really disappointed in the fact I've seen us have tougher hard debates where we could sit down and talk to one another, but we're

[4:02:30 PM]

acting like just straight-up idiots. And I think it's really sad in a city where we've been deemed like the Progressive haven of the south, like this issue in particular where we're talking about basic humanity and needs, we can't seem to come to the table. I've never been one to point at and blame anybody, I think it's selfish to blame this on the issue that has not started in June, that was here at least seven to ten years ago, anybody sitting on the dais. Everybody in this room, everybody that can hear me outside is complicit and the homeless issue is more apparent because we can see people living in actual 3-d big-ass tents. That's the core of this thing. I think I'm more disappointed in the fact that if you go to Germany, you can't walk an inch without seeing gold bricks or reminders of the holocaust. One of the most tragic

[4:03:31 PM]

things in human history. Here we are talking about actual human people and we want to hide them. We want to hide them from our kids, we want to hide the issues from our neighbors on the west side or southwest Austin. And when has ever hiding anything solved any issue in this country? And I don't want to pick on my white counterparts, but if you see the people that are coming up here, it's older white people that are so disconnected from reality --

[applause]

-- And instead of speaking for all of Austin. We need to be honest, yes, we have a homeless issue, but there's never been a solution to throwing people in jail that's going to fix anything. Keep in mind black people are nine times more likely to be homeless than white people. I hope they have enough for the black people in the freedom communities, I hope they have enough for the indigenous people in Mexico that Texas is part of and

[4:04:33 PM]

indigenous native Americans we killed to build this entire country.

[Cheers and applause]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Is Pamela Brubaker here? Why don't you come on down. You will have three minutes when you come down. Why don't you go ahead and then Ms. Freeze, you will be up next. After her.

>> Hi, I am vice chair of human rights commission. I also serve on the mayor's task force to address institutional racism and Texas apple seed and I am speaking today on behalf of Texas apple seed and a coalition related to homes not handcuffs. We sent a letter to council on behalf of the coalition of advocacy groups and direct providers for the homeless community including Austin justice coalition, echo, grass roots leadership, life works

[4:05:33 PM]

measure, Texas criminal justice coalition, Texas fair defense, Trinity center, united we dream and workers defense project. We like you and so many other organizations today believe individuals experiencing homelessness are our neighbors and deserve the same dignity and compassion we extend to other austinites. We need to shift attention from restricting where homeless people are allowed to preventing homelessness in the first place. We need to recognize access to housing and other resources is a human right and we should not be criminalizing people for circumstances deeply rooted in racial inequity and injustice. The changes that the city council made to the camping and no sit, no lie ordinances in June were sound, research based decisions. We all agree housing the homeless is a solution to homelessness. On the other hand, criminalizing homelessness is counterproductive and creates unnecessary and insurmountable hurdles. We support the changes made by this council in June to remove some of those

[4:06:35 PM]

barriers and prevent people from being pushed further into poverty by fines and warrants and invalid driver's licenses, jail time, criminal connections, et cetera. The ordinance changes proposed by mayor Adler and councilmember tovo undo much of the progress the council made in June. These proposals extend the list of prohibited areas which is discriminatory in a nature and creates more barriers that puts homeless people at further risk. Not to mention this discriminatory practice does expand the segregation that already exists in this city. Further, it will be impossible for people to know which areas they are permitted to camp, sit or lie, increasing unintentional violations of the ordinance and force interaction with law enforcement. These changes would only perpetuate the institution willal and cyst stemmatic

[4:07:36 PM]

racism. Instead we urge you to focus efforts in the assessment of immediate and permanent solutions to assist homeless individuals and implement measures to properly recollect time donated tie and prevent homelessness had the long run. Rectify.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[Applause] Introduce yourself.

>> Pamela Brubaker, district 5, I'm a homeowner, a person of faith and member of Austin justice coalition. I want to commend again city council for the work that you've done, the time that you put into it, and in the last few days have continued outreach to people experiencing homelessness both in my area Annika retakes near the -- and caritas near the arch. I was given permission to share stories from a man who is a volunteer at sunrise community church working

[4:08:37 PM]

with homeless, but himself had been homeless who had been dumped on the street after two weeks in the hospital and ticketed. And he says we don't want to go back to that. That does not help. Please say that. And then when I went to caritas near the arch, I talked to a woman who was very concerned about rollbacks and restrictions about where she could go because she said she tries to find spaces where she feels safe. And she's afraid that, you know, with bringing back some of the restrictions she won't be able to find places where she's been safe. She said that she was kicked out of the Salvation Army because she hadn't been able to get a job. She's been trying. She's waiting for an id. She said there aren't a lot of jobs around. Some other women there had applied for jobs but they had not had mentoring in terms of job interviews and

[4:09:37 PM]

didn't get jobs. So she said these are big obstacles, the wait for ids, the need for jobs which others have spoken about. So I think that there are good plans in place. Some of these issues of poverty are widespread across our country and not easily addressed, but I wish we all could have compassion because we could be in that situation. So please let's not be divided by this issue and hateful towards each other. We're all a part of this city. We're all people, human beings who deserve compassion. Thank you.

[Applause]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Is Elizabeth gianovich here? Why don't you come on down. You can go ahead.

>> Thank you, mayor and members, my name is Anna and I'm here in my capacity as a co-founder of the survivor

[4:10:38 PM]

justice project. We, as you know, have been advocating around the issue of sexual assault for a number of years now and with your help have passed some meaningful reforms to how our city responds to sexual assault. And it's precisely the issue of sexual assault that compelled us to be part of the homes not cuffs coalition for a couple of reasons. One, we know as has been stated earlier today that people who are homeless are at greater risk for violence including sexual violence. And we also couldn't sit back and watch and listen to the narrative that homeless people are somehow more sexually deviant or more sexually dangerous or more violent than other people. We've heard it today. We've heard it before today. And we care deeply about people who experience sexual assault as well as people who experience homelessness.

[4:11:39 PM]

We're here in support of the rollback that y'all made -- or the ordinance changes, excuse me, that you all made in June, June 20th. We would not like to go backwards. We know that there are people in place now at the city who are looking to assess the issue of homelessness more deeply to see how we can respond in the short, medium and long term. To the homeless people who are in the audience today and to the homeless people who may be watching somehow, I want you to know that you are valued. I want you to know that you are loved. And I want you to know that there are so many of us that want to find a solution to to this that hold you at the center.

[Applause] And keeps you visible. And keeps you visible. My first job out of college in 1996 was at safe in the

[4:12:40 PM]

homeless womens shelter for people who had experienced domestic violence and sexual assault. And I've always cared about the issue, but I never knew how prevalent it was until people were allowed to be free in the street and to sleep where they are safest, which is often the places that are most visible to us.

[Applause] As consumers to us, as people driving by in our cars, it's an interruption to the everyday lives that we enjoy. And I'm grateful to have seen it. I don't want to unsee it. Thank you.

[Applause]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Is Robert sensusi here?

>> Yes.

>> Mayor Adler: You will be up. Ma'am, you have three minutes.

>> Thank you forgiving me the chance to speak. I came in Austin since 19 -- I am a citizen here in Austin, Texas, resident

[4:13:41 PM]

since 1976 and pay taxes. So last year the city of Austin passed a bond for about \$250 million, and this is for affordable housing. So I spoke to a cousin in Los Angeles, California, a few days ago and the -- what she said that she is living many years in Los Angeles, and I didn't know all this information. They live 40,000 homeless. She's about four streets away in a very kind of filthy streets and they live in tents. That's their choice. She said they don't want any housing. So all this money that was spent for housing, I'm not sure what it's going to do because she said it several times, my cousin, that they don't want to stay in houses, they want to stay in tents, to be camping.

[4:14:41 PM]

Also she said that the streets are very filthy, like I said, and there is plenty of infectious diseases, like nobody is talking about but tuberculosis, leprosy. This is really getting serious. I like the homeless people. I don't have anything to say bad, but we have to take care of those problems that are coming up. And please, mayor and Austin city council, please don't bring any more homeless people from California, Seattle and other cities.

[Applause] Because we've got enough here. We have lots of problems here. So let's take care of our problems. So I was long time ago here in Austin, just a reminder, it was a health hazard for the town lake. We had a problem. And then -- which is now lady bird lake, I think. So please Google it and find out that we had some

[4:15:44 PM]

problems at that time. And find out solutions for all these problems that are created here right now in Austin, Texas. So don't mess with Austin, Texas and don't mess with Texas. That's the old slogan. Thank you.

[Applause]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Is holly Kirby here? Holly Kirby? You have time donated by Nathan Stevens. Is Nathan here? No in. You have three minutes.

>> My name is Robert sensusi, I'm 20 years old, a student at U.T. Austin and a constituent of councilmember tovo's. Today I'm strongly opposed against any changes to the city ordinances that further criminalizes homelessness. Three months ago I sat here proud, as you all, took the extraordinary first steps of decriminalizing homelessness.

[4:16:44 PM]

Decriminalizing the mere existence of our neighbors. I've been disheartened to see the onslaught of backlash and fear, especially the U.T. Community. It does not make the students -- cannot exist around campus. Public safety risks are illegal. With the proposed changes that the problem should once again be pushed do you happen the road by police so student don't have to be confronted with the realities of cruelty and injustice imposed on those least fortunate. Police have not and will not solve the crisis of homelessness, only homes can do that. We cannot go back. We need homes, not handcuffs. Thank you.

[Applause]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. All right. I have three more spots for people that want to speak that do not support what the council is doing. I can't tell from my list who those people are. So I'm going to call names as they appear and I'm going

[4:17:44 PM]

to ask that question and I'm asking the question so that I make sure that I have three people that come up next and speak who do not support what the council is doing. Is Andrea black here? Do you support the council?

>> [Inaudible]

>> Mayor Adler: The action in June. Let's do it that way. Do you support the action in June?

>> [Inaudible]

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. What about alee is a tore -- Alicia torres? No? What about Seth Dillon? Is he here? No? What about Matt Arnold? Is Matt Arnold here? Do you support what the council did in June?

>> [Inaudible]

>> Mayor Adler: Is Daniel Lucio here? Do you support what council did in June?

>> [Inaudible]

>> Mayor Adler: You do. Okay. We'll get to you in a moment.

[4:18:44 PM]

What about Shane Johnson?

>> I support what council did in June.

>> Mayor Adler: Doris Smith?

>> [Inaudible]

>> Mayor Adler: Why don't you come on down here then. You will be our next speaker. After Ms. Smith speaks, is George Scariano here?

>> Right here.

>> Mayor Adler: Do you support what council did in June? You will be next. Is Michael Floyd here? Do you support what council did in June?

>> [Inaudible]

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. What about Jan Santos, do you support what council did in June? You will be the fourth speaker and the last of our three-minute speakers. Ms. Kirby, you have four minutes.

>> Play a video first.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Why don't you play the video.

[4:19:48 PM]

>> I spent the night and sometimes people with me. It's a place of business. You can't lay in certain areas. And they didn't know where to go.

[Indiscernible] At the end of the day people walk up and down the street. I don't like it, but I have to deal with it. I'm a drugs because I see why people get high because it's like who want to be outside every day. Ain't nothing like being in your own place and have peace of mind.

[4:21:12 PM]

>> Hello. Thank you. Holly Kirby. I work at grass roots leadership and I'm a member of homes not handcuffs coalition. I echo what so many of my colleagues have said thus far, supporting the bold steps that you all took in June. You all know it was the right thing to do. Period. So I'm encouraged by the support we have today, I'm encouraged by you all. I see and I think a lot of us see the hard work and commitment you all are putting into real solutions to our homelessness crisis. Please say folk -- stay

focused. Please do not allow some of our angrier folks in the room to intimidate you. I think you all know you did the right thing. I think you know you are on the right path, that you are

[4:22:13 PM]

working hard, that you deeply care about addressing homelessness and not just because you don't want to see it. So I thank you and stay focused. Thanks.

[Applause]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Would the next speaker I called move down to the podium? I think it might have been you. Go ahead, please. You have three minutes.

>> Am I in the right place? Should I be in a different place?

>> Mayor Adler: No, no, you are fine.

>> I'm nearsighted so you can't see you very clearly. I don't support what the council did in June and I don't support changing that selectively for the U.T. Campus or the U.T. Area. I think -- well, first of all, I asked to circulate a picture that's been on the web that was taken of my -- of the corner of north gate

[4:23:15 PM]

and 183. There's a homeless camp there and they've got painted on the wall above them f-u-c-c-u give dollars. That's basically we've been seeing a completely different attitude and behavior from the homeless around the city since June. And first to be more clear, minority Austin community has pretty much decided we're not talking about homeless people per se, we're talking about a criminal element. Some are homeless, some are not.

[Applause] We're talking about drug addicts, people with alcohol issues and criminals, basically. In addition to addiction, they panhandle aggressively and act aggressive and burglarize and rob people. I live at rundberg and north gate. The working poor are often homeless but they don't live in tents with trash and them. They get up and go to work every day. It's very hard to see them. If you wanted to help them,

[4:24:16 PM]

you would provide help with people in danger of becoming homeless. I'm struggling working poor. Why can't we get help before we're homeless. In the rundberg metric, 183 area, we're being terrorized. I don't feel safe waiting for the bus in the morning. People are getting robbed and shot. There have been

five shootings on my street corner. This has all been since last spring. Children and city workers with getting rocks thrown at them at the end of Payton gij and they are hanging in backyards and stealing at will. Problems are coming from two places, one is the homeless camps and a lot from the echo settlements. The city has a program where they are cramming homeless people into apartments on our area and some other areas around the city. And they are not screened at all. They are not supervised at

[4:25:16 PM]

all. And we watch people who live there sell drugs out in the building in front -- on the street from these apartments. They wander the neighborhood aggressively and mentally out of it and angry and waving their arms and cussing and violent and the reason why I'm scared to go down the street. We call 911 and 311 and cannot get this dealt with. This problem has been on the news and, okay, basically you need to repeal that -- the change that you passed in June --

[buzzer sounding]

-- And as --

>> Mayor Adler: Your time is up. Ma'am, thank you very much.

>> Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: I think we recognized someone here. Come on up.

[Applause] You have three minutes, sir. Sir, you have three minutes.

>> Mayor and council, thank you very much. George, co-owner and co-founder of royal blue grocery, a small chain of markets with six locations in and around the downtown grid. I'm lucky enough to say a

[4:26:16 PM]

fair amount of people in this room have been customers of my stores for the 13 years we've been doing business. In those years, as merchants downtown, we've had a compassionate and complicated relationship with our many homeless neighbors. They have been customers as long as purchases have remained respectful and workable. Our stores also feed hundreds of our homeless neighbors weekly through donations at Trinity center on 7th street. For many years we've also dealt with the not so great flip side. No shortage of petty crime, shoplifting, vandalism and more concerningly increasing violence and threatening behavior towards our patrons and employees. What had been a gradually eroding situation downtown for years still felt manageable. On July 1, what had been a smoldering fire felt like kerosene had been dumped on it. Aggressive behavior, brazen shoplifting and violent threats to our employees, downtown workers and tourists have skyrocketed. In particular at our sixth

[4:27:18 PM]

and congress store. But as we all know, all of downtown has been affected dramatically as well. We continue to lean heavily on our great partnership with APD. Regrettably we are forced to call 911 all too often and many times the offending party is long gone. Not surprisingly incidents in and around our stores decreased to practical zero when there is APD officer presence nearby. As merchants and employers, we're obligated to provide a safe place for our employees and customers. Many small business owners now feel seriously compromised being able to uphold that obligation. Our patio at the congress stores, built in partnership with the city and downtown Austin alliance to make Austin's downtown more vibrant is a campground and unbelievably hard to manage particularly at night. We're actively considering closing that store at 6:00 P.M. To protect our staff and customers.

[4:28:19 PM]

In short, we need help now. Decriminalizing homelessness and forthcoming housing solutions are admirable, but right now daily we are dealing with prevalent lawlessness. In addition, we are respectfully asking for immediate help in securing our rights as merchants and keeping the downtown safe and clean enough to conduct business in. Thank you.

[Applause]

>> Mayor Adler: Alicia, why don't you come to this podium. You have time donated from suki mcman. Is she here?

>> She's out in the hallway.

>> Is suki still here? She donated time?

>> [Inaudible]

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. You will have one minute unless somebody else comes down to donate time. You are our last

[4:29:21 PM]

three-minute speaker.

>> Good afternoon, or evening. Jenn, I'm the general manager at our downtown location across the street. We appreciate all the effort that you guys have been making to be inclusive in the downtown area with all members of the community, but I'm here on behalf of my employees and the safety concerns that these ordinances have presented to us. On Saturday night, we had somebody outside of our employee entrance that was making harassing statements and passed out where my employees

couldn't get out of the door. We did call 911, and thank goodness for the police as well as the downtown Austin alliance who have been huge, huge resources in making sure that our employees are getting to and from their cars safely. But most of the time they are gone before they are able to even address the

[4:30:24 PM]

harassing behavior. So what we're asking for is just keep in mind that we have employees that arrive at 6:30 in the morning and they leave after 10:30 at night. And if we don't put more restrictions on the downtown area to preserve this -- this beautiful city, I mean we're not nearly as bad as San Francisco L.A., but we will get there. We will get there.

[Applause] I'm from California myself and we will get there if we don't take the actions now and act smart about what we're allowing. But please, take -- take into consideration employees that I protect every single day to make sure they can come to and from work very safely. And I can't do that right now. I can't make that promise. I can't keep that promise without stricter -- I guess stricter restrictions

[4:31:25 PM]

surrounding this. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[Applause] We're now -- each speaker has one minute, donated time is one minute. You have one minute. Plus donated time, you have three minutes.

>> I have a slide deck. Do I have the ability to scroll through it at all?

>> Mayor Adler: Yes. Do you have a clicker?

>> Should I just hang out here?

>> Mayor Adler: Hang out there is fine too.

>> Thank you for your time. My name is Alicia, member of Austin human rights commission and secretary of Austin young Democrats who signed on against the proposed ordinance to clarify what we had already dealt with in June. First off I wanted to thank you all for being so brave. I know it wasn't easy to go out on a limb and do what was right and uphold human rights here in this city, but I think we all know it was the right thing to do and in sin that's what we

[4:32:26 PM]

do, we -- in Austin we push things forward when our state government is looking to hold us back centuries, we move forward. I'd rather not read my same arguments. I'm usually here sharing stories, but today I'm here to try something nerdier. Bear with me. I already messed it up. What happened to my slide deck? I'm going to skip to the end. Do I go like this? There I got it. Just to clarify, we have some gis maps that a bunch of students at Austin community college helped us put together that's an overlay of what the areas where homelessness would be prohibited should these ordinances, most recent ordinances be passed. We did have some limitations due to novice gis skills and trying really hard. They don't count flood Zones, medians. The boundaries surrounding shelters that were also

[4:33:27 PM]

being discussed in this newest ordinance or private property or the downtown addition of sit/lie. These maps you are about to look at underrepresent the area that would be prohibited from camping on. Just imagine private property and what that would add. But then there's clarification of what each of the symbols means. So this is what the new ordinance would look like in terms of where folks would not be allowed to camp. And again, that's not counting private property. That's not counting flood Zones. So the lime green public parks, you see bus routes, a lot of things in there. But I mean it's pretty extensive and my question is so I know that we all want to solve homelessness. That's one thing every single person in this room agrees with, but where do these people go.

[4:34:27 PM]

The places I'm seeing open are in Terry town and Clarksville, but I'm not sure if those neighborhoods are looking to shoulder this additional burden of these citizens that don't have anywhere to go. I mean, I believe that west Austin should be stepping up to the plate a little more than east Austin which is disproportionately borne the brunt of a lot of development in the city. Do we want to push them over to west lake? I can't imagine the citizens of west lake are going to be very happy if we start busing our homeless over there. There certainly are not adequate services there, amenities, bathrooms, anything over in west lake to provide a decent and dignified existence. Usually I'm here talking about sexual assault or telling stories. This time I just --

[buzzer sounding]

-- I think this speaks for itself. Where are these people supposed to go?

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much.

[Applause] Is Darrin rekovich here?

[4:35:30 PM]

April Smith? Leonard Wilson. Melissa? Timothy oltanaro? Andrea black? Andrea black, come on down. You have time donated from Kanoa Artiaga. Thank you. What about Nakia Winfield? You have three minutes.

>> Great. Thank you. Andrea black, I'm a resident of district 1. I'm also a member of the city of Austin equity action team. And I just want to -- as many others have said, want to applaud and appreciate you for your moral and courageous action on June 20th in changing these ordinances. And I really ask you to hold firm. I think we really appreciate what you've been saying about you have a plan, you just -- you just hired the new resource executive.

[4:36:32 PM]

You have resources that you've invested, so now is the time to hold firm. The answer is not to recriminalize people. I particularly want to speak as a white woman in this moment because I think we've talked about other people have mentioned how this is really a racial -- there are a strong of racial elements here. The people who are experiencing homelessness are predominantly people of color and I personally as a white woman do not refuse to -- this is historically the call to protect white women in particular has historically been the excuse for some of the most worse violence against people of color. And so I refuse to have calls for my safety be the excuse for recriminalizing people who are experiencing homelessness.

[Applause] See, I'm actually getting nervous saying this, but I've got to say it. I also want to highlight the between feeling uncomfortable and physically unsafe.

[4:37:33 PM]

[Applause] So, you know, as white people and particularly people -- also people well off in this city we have this sense we deserve to feel safe. This is one of the under pinnings of our white supremacist cultures, this city is ours, it's ours to own. And so we don't want to feel uncomfortable. We want to have it remain hidden, right? So yes, it is uncomfortable. It's very uncomfortable to see people experiencing homelessness. It makes my heart ache. These are our neighbors, members of our communities, right? However, feeling uncomfortable is not a threat to our safety. And I really hope we can continue, you all can be very honest in this distinction. And hold firm with what you are saying. I do hear that there have been -- there has been an increase in -- people are talking about increases in some -- in some harassing activity and other maybe perhaps illegal activity. I guess the question is we

[4:38:35 PM]

haven't seen any documented data of that. This is all kind of hearsay at this point. If there are, what we've been understanding the police are not necessarily enforcing it. They are confused what they are allowed and not allowed to enforce. Actually asking the police to understand the rules and enforce them would go a long way. It's important, other people have said this, have the people most directly impacted, people experiencing homelessness really be at the center of this. Right now we've all been trying to come up with answers but we need to ask. That.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[Applause] Is Alicia torres here? Is Alicia torres here?

>> Tovo: Mayor, you know you kind of set some guidelines in the beginning, I would just ask again, it's really -- our decisions are enhanced by having as many voices in these conversations and I would ask if you disagree with somebody not to hiss and boo. It really impact's people

[4:39:35 PM]

ability to feel safe within these conversations. I appreciate those of you doing hand signals, but if you could not boo and hiss and make people feel uncomfortable. This is a challenging conversation and I would ask we try to have it with respect.

>> Mayor Adler: Councilmember tovo, thank you. Had I heard that, I would have said something as well. Alicia torres. No? What about Seth Dillon? What about Matt Arnold? Come on down. I'm going to call out some other speakers as well. Now we're in the one minute so if you would come to the podium, stand behind people at the podium. Is Daniel Lucio here? Come on down. Lining up behind them is Shane Johnson here? Mr. Johnson, you have time donated from Mandy blot. And Thomas Trent.

[4:40:37 PM]

Is Thomas Trent here? No? Mr. Johnson, you'll have two minutes when you come up. Please come on down and get in line so we can move more quickly here. We still have 100 speakers.

>> Kitchen: Mayor, may I ask you a question?

>> Mayor Adler: Yes.

>> Kitchen: We have a lot of speakers and we're going to stay into the evening? I think it's -- it's 4:40 now. Sometime soon we should indicate what we intended to, if we're going to work through dinner or take a dinner break. I think it would be important for people's planning purposes.

>> Mayor Adler: Let's see how many speakers, I mean we might have an indication what our total are if we could go for another 30 minutes.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> Mayor Adler: At this point and assess it at that point. Is Michael Floyd here? You have time donated from David Guadino. Is David here? Yes? What about Trenton

[4:41:38 PM]

Henderson. You will have three minutes. I think you were next, sir.

>> Hi. I'm a business owner and homeowner in district 5. And I'm here to tell our councilmembers to keep sitting and lying and camping legal with no new restrictions and to provide additional services in the meantime while we're working on a housing first solution. If someone is sleeping on the underpass at Manchaca and Ben White, you can't make them safer by ticketing them, arresting them or forcing them to move and robbing them of their positions, which they call a cleanup. The real way to help them is with housing. Until then, what you can do to help is to provide trash pickup, lockers, restrooms, laundry service, cell phones. If you want to use police against the homeless, I

[4:42:39 PM]

don't believe that your real concern is the safety and health of folks sleeping out on the streets. I think that your real concern is that those people are visible.

[Buzzer sounding]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Thank you. Why don't you introduce yourself, please, sir.

>> Sure. Can you hear me? Great. Daniel Lucio. I live at 1155 Poquito Street. I know some of you from my work with Google Fiber and I'm here speaking on behalf of myself. I'm very concerned about this issue. As someone who has experienced housing insecurity in his life, as someone who has been rejected rent at places because I have an arrest on my record and had to check that box, this is something that affects -- that has affected me personally and will affect constituents in your communities. You took a bold step in

[4:43:43 PM]

decriminalizing activities of just existing in this community in June and I commend you for that and want to urge you to keep pushing for resources to provide permanent housing solutions in this community. What we should not do now is take back those solutions that you have fought for. What we should do is allow for folks to seek resources that they need-

[buzzer sounding]

-- In this community. Thank you for your work.

>> Mayor Adler: Was Shane Johnson here? I think you had two minutes.

>> One more person has donated to me.

>> Mayor Adler: You have three minutes. >>.

>> Yeah. Shane Johnson. Just moved to to district 3. My family resides in district 7. Among other things I'm a board member for indivisible Austin, which has endorsed the work of the homes not handcuffs coalition and we

[4:44:44 PM]

ask that you stick with the morally right thing to do that did you in June. This policy that has failed us is a policy that we haven't even had time to see the impact of. Between -- as Chaz, between 23 and 43% of Austin's population experiencing homelessness is black and there's not only a school to prison pipeline, but there's a prison to homelessness pipeline when predominantly black people are criminalized in school they can't get housing or a job. So this is a matter of of how race and racism manifest in health care, and the criminal justice system. Why is almost every person fighting against policies that help homeless people is a white upper middle class person in this room? They keep saying repeal the

[4:45:44 PM]

decriminalization, ie criminalize people, while saying oh, I want to help homeless people, when a repeal would go back to policies that force homeless people to not only not know what to do, to be forcibly removed from police, which is a traumatizing experience, and many of them to have to camp in river beds in which they were then swept away in the flooding and drowned. 2019 is not the year that council ruined Austin, is the year that the true racist underbelly of Austin showed itself.

[Applause]. How are we going to address the problem of homeliness in Austin when we can't see it? If we can't see the full scale of it, which was what was happening before. Arresting homeless people as many people said, doesn't solve the problem. First of U it's unconstitutional. That can result in extremely costly lawsuits that waste city money. In addition to actually making it harder for people who are experiencing homelessness to get a job if they don't already have one,

[4:46:47 PM]

many do, or to get housing, we can all agree is the ultimate solution. We can't arrest our way out of a health care and mental health and housing crisis, and we haven't had the money to address this

problem, yet all of you just voted to add additional cadet spots to the Austin police force. When the Austin police force can't even fully fill the cadet spots from last year's budget. That was a waste of over a million dollars that could have gone to helping homeless people or other policy crisis, and especially considering that we're facing budget shortages because of state policy.

[Buzzer sounds] And so lastly I'll finish by saying that I've been in mental health crisis, I've been hospitalized by heatstroke, I've had chronic insomnia. These are problems that make it extremely hard to function and homeless people are already facing. We can't criminalize them and make it harder to

[4:47:49 PM]

function. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much.

[Applause]. Before you speak, sir, is Doug gherkin here? What about Leo Benavides? Come on down, sir. You had time donated from Eric Navarro. Is Mr. Navarro here? You will have two minutes, sir, when you come up. Is iow solovitz here? I think he left. What about cliff Kaplan? What about Kenneth Greep? No? What about David king? Why don't you come on down, Mr. King. You had time donated from Tony teal. Is Tony teal here? No. You will have one minute, Mr. King. Go ahead, sir.

>> Good afternoon, my name is Michael Floyd. I'm here to speak on behalf of Austin interfaith, a

[4:48:49 PM]

coalition of 37 religious congregations, workers groups and ngos that has member institutions in every council district in the city. We are committed to the idea of equal dignity for every human being and we believe that a community is judged by the way it treats its most vulnerable members. In our most agenda of issues we therefore set forth the following goals for the

city: First to develop a comprehensive strategy to end homelessness. And second to end policies that criminalize homelessness. We are pleased that the city has made significant progress on these goals. The historic budgeting of 62.7 million will enable us to begin a comprehensive strategy to deal with homelessness. In addition, the revision of the sections of the city code that criminalize homeless camping, sitting and lying in all public places was a great step forward. We supported these revisions, realizing that they were only a first step in part of a much larger process, and that they might need to be further revised in light of future

[4:49:50 PM]

developments. We are not opposed to reconsideration, but we are Kerr concerned that some of the proposed changes to the city code may be a step backward. The revisions approved last spring made being a threat to public health and safety, obstructing public access the main criteria for chargeable offenses. The recent increased visibility of homeless persons in parts of the city where they were not previously very noticeable has led some to suppose that these criteria are somehow defective. We would argue that there has not been enough experience with the new rules to tell whether this is in fact the case. We tend to agree with those councilmembers who say that as a matter of public policy making we should pause to allow the full implementation and evaluation of the measures that were passed last summer. In a few particularly serious cases, some additional clarification may be in order, but in general there is not now any need for increased restrictions that further specify what is prohibited and where. We also note that outside

[4:50:50 PM]

interests are trying to stoke panic by their hyperbolic descriptions of an alleged out of control homelessness crisis in Austin, and we should not develop public policy in response to any such pandering of partisan interests. If council feels that it must now make adaptations to the revised ordinances, we think the more moderate changes proposed by some members are better than reimposing bans on large swaths of the city that would continue to just shuffle people experiencing homelessness around once again, making their lives even more difficult. You are as a council not to revert to language in any ordinance that implies that the simple human activities such as sitting or lying down are somehow lawless. We would do better to spend our resources and energy in providing more houses and services as soon as possible so that people will not be on the streets because they have somewhere else to go. In the meantime, unfortunately, public camping is a necessary thing. It is our hope that safe and

[4:51:51 PM]

clean places can be found where those without shelter can pitch their tents.

[Buzzer sounds] , Rather than telling them where they can't go. Before tightening prohibitions, staff and new homeless strategic officers --

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

>> To mandate such safe places. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you, pastor.

>> Flannigan: Mayor? Just quickly for the gentleman from interfaith who is walking away. Come back, come back! Come back. Just very quickly because I don't want to extend this. When you've had

conversations with the faith communities that are part of interfaith, has the notion of having -- allowing the churches that have property be one of the locations where homeless people might be welcome?

>> Yes, that has come up. It hasn't gone anywhere particularly. I think we're waiting to hear from the city what the plan is.

>> Flannigan: We've been welcoming with some churches --

>> We would be willing to work with it once we know what the plan is.

>> Flannigan: I don't know about the participation in that plan is. We have been working with churches that are in district 6 to find out how we get that done. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you

[4:52:51 PM]

for that. Before Mr. Benavides speaks, Mr. King is going to speak. Next, you will be coming up next. Is Matt meleka here? Why don't you come on down? Do I have other people here with -- I'm sorry, what?

>> [Inaudible - no mic].

>> Mayor Adler: I got that. You will be up second, Mr. King. First is going to be Mr. Benavides.

>> Me?

>> Mayor Adler: Yes, sir. You have two minutes, sir.

>> Huh?

>> Mayor Adler: Two minutes.

>> Okay. Because you have to speak to me clearly, okay? 1972 I was here in Austin. I quit my job in a fishing boat. I caught a flounder with three eyes, one at the bottom. Okay? I came to Austin wanting to know where should I go, where should I be?

[4:53:51 PM]

Because every time I signed up for housing, two years to wait. Go to California, two years to wait. Go to Oregon, two years to wait. Grand junction, Colorado, two years to wait. So where am I at? In two more years? I'm 76. Born in '68, March 25th. That's a long way to wait. How old are you? Another two years? Peace out.

[Applause].

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Before Mr. King speaks, is there anyone else here who has children with them here? Okay. After Mr. Meleka speaks, is

[4:54:53 PM]

Chao Connally here? What about Diane Clark? Monica Washington? What about Mike burnet? Why don't you come on down and get in line. John Williams, why don't you come down and get in line. Mr. King, you have two minutes.

>> Mr. Mayor and councilmembers, thank you for decriminalizing homelessness in public places in Austin. Thank you for providing more housing and services for homeless people in Austin. Please do not retreat one inch from the humane decriminalization policies you enacted it in June to ensure that homeless people with utilize public spaces to survive in Austin, to survive in Austin. Proposals to recriminalize homelessness in downtown,

[4:55:54 PM]

west Austin, city hall, governor's mansion, capital complex and public libraries are by-products of misrepresentations and fear mongering. Don't hide our homeless people. Let them use our public spaces, including the governor's mansion and the capitol complex.

[Applause]. After all it's the conservative policies of the party down the street that has our economic segregation here in Austin and our homeless crisis. Don't bring homeless people here from California. Who does that sound like? The man up top, president trump, he's making it okay for people here to behave that way. I'm embarrassed. And I'm angry at that kind of rhetoric here in Austin, Texas. Recriminalizing homelessness in public spaces in affluent areas of Austin is classist,

[4:56:56 PM]

racist, inhumane and designed to keep homeless people out of sight of affluent residents who -- and tourists who are offended or frightened by them. We don't want our tourists to see our homeless people. Get them out of downtown, they might see them if they come to downtown. How sad. Please, do not recriminalize homelessness in downtown Austin or any other public places? Austin. Please provide permanent housing, food, clothing, health care, support services and compassion to homeless people. Thank you.

[Applause].

>> Harper-madison: Mayor Adler, we would like to offer this young lady the opportunity to come on down with her baby on her back? You asked if there were any other people in the room with children.

>> Mayor Adler: I think so. Do you have children with you here?

>> Not with me, no.

[Laughter].

>> Mayor Adler: Why don't you come on down.

>> Hello. My name is Anna Stewart, and

[4:57:58 PM]

I'm in district 1. I'm here today as a concerned parent. We've heard from a lot of concerned parents. I'm concerned. I'm concerned for Austin and I'm concerned for the human race and what affects one of us affects all of us. I wasn't planning to speak today so I didn't come with something written and I couldn't really write it when I had him with me, but I just want to try and speak from the heart.

>> Momma.

[Laughter].

>> Sorry, one minute. I think it's embarrassing to live in a city that on its face is liberal and its policies don't match up with that. I think it's the most insidious kind of selfishness to pretend to

[4:59:00 PM]

know better or maybe even to know better, but not act accordingly. You know, I feel like a lot of people say I LE in Texas, but, but, it's Austin. We're the liberal city. I think that that could be true, and I think a lot of the push-back might even be coming from people who don't even live in Austin and who are not your constituents. And I ask you to please ignore the hateful rhetoric coming from people who want to criminalize people without homes. And it's a human right to be able to lie down. It's a human right to be able to sleep. I don't think I need to reiterate any of the points that people have made before me. And I also don't want to -- I just don't think I know more about the issue than all of you. I think you know what's going on in Houston.

[Buzzer sounds] And how they're doing it.

[5:00:04 PM]

Or -- anyway, thanks for letting me speak. I really appreciate it.

>> Mayor Adler: Mr. Meleka Mr. Meleka. Were you first? Go ahead.

>> Doug gherkin. And Monica Washington has given me some minutes.

>> You have two minutes.

>> For the last 35 years I've been in affordable housing, low income housing apartment owner and operator. We own the heights on south congress next to St. Ed's. We have campers in our front yard. My major concern is I think this was a ready, fire, aim ordinance in that we weren't ready to deal with the people we were serving, the people that were forcing it. I have 172 families that are just on this side of dealing with this issue. That's what I've done my entire adult life.

[5:01:07 PM]

I call the police and say we've got a problem, we have a crowd forming down here. The police have no idea what they can and can't do. I called Mr. Renteria and he told me about his family history with housing and lack of it, and I appreciate that. But when I have 20 women that have said they don't feel safe going to the bottom of the driveway where I have a cab stand, the only thing this ambiguous ordinance that says you can't camp next to a taxi stand. 12 feet from my taxi stand. The police are down there, they're on top of an AT&T twin pothole, twin cover, and AT&T gets there and their response is when they asked the guys camping there, they said if you ever need to get in there, just let us know, we'll move our

[5:02:07 PM]

stuff. That's not quite what I think they had in mind. Previous and so we need to protect these same people that has been my job. We need some certainty --

[buzzer sounds]

-- And some clarity. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[Applause]. Mr. Meleka. You have one minute.

>> My name is Matthew and I'm here representing the ending homeless coalition or echo, as the executive director. Thank you for allowing me to speak on such an important topic at such an important time. Right now it's echo's position that it's unfair to change the ordinances until low barrier access to housing and supportive services is provided to people experiencing homelessness in Austin. I could stand here and rattle off the statistics about the cost savings to health care and criminal justice institutions associated with housing people experiencing homelessness. Instead I'll let you look those up

on your own. The connection between housing and health is coldly logical. The sick and vulnerable become homeless and the

[5:03:07 PM]

homeless become sicker and more vulnerable. There's a 54% rate of chronic homelessness here in Austin as shown in data through our coordinated entry system. The average life expectancy in the United States is almost 80. Chronickicly homeless individuals can expect to live only to their 60s, including one study by Dr. Jim O'Connell, president of Boston health care program that shows an average life expectancy.

[Buzzer sounds] For homeless people between 42 and 52. Lastly I want to say that people experiencing homelessness in our community be depending on us to prioritize health and safety as human beings, not debating the nuances of ordinances that allow them to camp outside, but affirming their --

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you, sir.

>> And transition into permanent supportive housing.

>> Casar: Thank you for your testimony. As you know, something was put out yesterday from multiple councilmembers from the idea that if there is an

[5:04:09 PM]

idea that is -- that folks should not be, that we provide housing and services to folks before letting folks know that they need to move because that area has been designated unsafe. But in previous versions the idea was that people might be offered shelter, but what I've heard from service providers and I think from you is that it's important for them to actually be offered a permanent solution of some form of permanent housing. Is that generally y'all's view?

>> That's correct. I think if people were if people experiencing homelessness should have a say in what housing options are provided to them. Many folks experiencing homelessness don't -- for a lot of reasons don't want to access shelter. You've heard that today from many people it's important that we provide these services to people in realtime and the resources that people experiencing homelessness desire and are

[5:05:09 PM]

provided in the manner that they will accept.

>> Casar: And it's important for us to provide it to them even if they can't provide id.

>> I think that's correct.

>> Kitchen: Mayor, I would like to --

>> Mayor Adler: One second.

>> Casar: Actually, if you have any questions on that point I'll yield as long as I can speak after.

>> Kitchen: I have a quick question. You probably haven't had a chance to think through it, but I would love your thinking on both the resolution and the -- the phased approach that councilmembers Casar, the mayor and councilmember tovo and I put forward. And I think that inherent in that is shelter plus service -- housing services and housing services means long-term housing services, not just a bed in a shelter. So I agree with councilmember Casar's question and I want to point out that what we're proposing, both in the phased approach and in the

[5:06:10 PM]

resolution, is something that gets someone all the way there. It gives someone a safe, immediate bed that is helpful to them and that is something that they value better for them than on the street. , Along with the services that are going to connect to more permanent supportive housing. So iould ask you to look at the phased approach that's being proposed as well as the resolution that councilmember tovo has put out. The intent is to -- both those -- of both those proposals is to get us to the place that you just mentioned, you know, in terms of permanent housing. And you thank you for your work here, the work that echo does is integral to our community and really appreciate you being part of the conversation.

>> Well, thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Do you want to comment on the -- have you had a chance to read it?

>> I would. I have been able to read it,

[5:07:11 PM]

not as best I can and on my phone in a short amount of time out in the lobby. But I will say that the thing that's very important to all this is the services can be provided. We can provide case management services to people. We need permanent supportive housing. We need housing that is dedicated to people with -- for low barrier access to housing and a housing resource that's not time dependent and that people can act on and move in quickly, and that's not necessarily shelter. Shelter might work and the shelter model might be great for some. Bridge housing model might be great for some. Really what we need is people to have equal access to our housing stock in Austin. We need people to be able to move into their own apartments.

>> Tovo: I want to say that the resolution that councilmember kitchen referred to is the resolution that [indiscernible], and I believe that your

[5:08:12 PM]

suggestions were all integrated into that. If you want a printout of the resolution there should still be some over here. But I appreciate your input and the work that-- the work that you put into helping us really refine the section on the every camp. Response -- encampment as well as the responses.

>> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Casar.

>> Casar: That's okay. Just because we were in this break and I know we've been discussing the approach posted on the message board yesterday that offered a variety of alternatives, but it wasn't always clear what the preferences were. So we're going to be posting on the message board my existing preferences and I'm handing out a copy here in case folks want to be flipping through it or looking at it, sort of condensed without all the alternatives in that version.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Councilmember? Yes, harper-madison.

>> Harper-madison: Thank you. Can I ask you a question, please? Would you mind coming back down to the podium?

[5:09:17 PM]

>> Mayor Adler: Sorry. You only thought you had gotten away. So in response to a letter that I got from a constituent who is -- who works in the field eight years working in the field directly with people experiencing homelessness. She posed some questions to me that I'd like to just along with my colleagues figure out the issues are experiencing in the field as opposed to our coordinated approach. I'm going to read a section

of the letter: Address issues with the echo process. This is the number one issue. Almost all of the affordable housing opportunities for this population come through the coordinated assessment through echo. You make an appointment, do the assessment with a case worker and then you're given a score. They tell you if you scored rapid rehousing or permanent supportive housing. You pick one. Which she highlights is a pretty confusing, but important decision. And then they send you on your way and say to connect them if your connect info changes. This is something that I

[5:10:18 PM]

really am curious about how we can reconcile. She said you can imagine that this is a population of people for whom their contact information regularly changes. She also says, da, da, da... The loophole. So to do the coordinated assessment resulting in any housing opportunities, you have to be by hud definition literally homeless. This means street shelter or car, couch surfing, being in jail, being in a hospital are counted as being housed. Folks meeting the literally homeless criteria are very unlikely to be in a place to be able to decide to do a coordinated assessment and/or navigate the systems to make an appointment to get in the door and complete an in-office or agency setting. She goes on to say, and this is another part that I'm really curious to see what

[5:11:19 PM]

we can do that's tangible, da, da-- the example is the housed part. She says motivation for change. Okay. So she's talking about you being technically housed. She said an example of this, most folks that come into my office are in a period of psychiatric crisis which leads to their arrest. They get arrested, they're found incompetent to stand trial and then they go to the state hospital. For many folks this hospitalization leads to significant improvement of symptoms and then there's an opportunity for them to set short and long-term goals. And there's ample opportunity to set them up with someone with a discharge plan, but guess what? They could have been homeless for years prior to their arrest. Unless they return to the street or shelter and at which point they are likely to go off of their meds, using drugs or alcohol, they aren't eligible. The system constantly presents situations like this. And so I guess I'm just

[5:12:19 PM]

trying to figure out -- I'm not asking you to answer all of that right now.

>> Thank you for that.

>> Harper-madison: But for the folks in the room who are interested in knowing sort of what our options are to address these disparities and what our treatment options, because I really, really appreciate the work that y'all do and during the course of these conversations my colleagues and I have gotten to know just how much it is you guys do. So figuring out what we can do to be more supportive and figuring out where the -- she called it the loopholes. Figure out where our loopholes are where in addition to permanent supportive housing where are we failing systemically?

>> So I'll address just a couple of things as quickly as I can because I know a lot of people want to speak. I'll say this, first of all, trying to make sense of some of the hud, you know, restrictions around funding is hard. It's complicated and convoluted. It's not set up to be able to address homeless homelessness in a dynamic, proactive way. Right now I think what we need is an infusion of funds that are not tied to

[5:13:22 PM]

specific funding sources. So federal funds are great and they serve a purpose in our community. We need dynamic funds to be able to catch folks that are coming out of institutions like as you mentioned, rapid rehousing and the coordinated entry system are responses to scarcity within our housing resources. And we need a coordinated response testimony is because we -- system because we don't have enough to serve that need help to resolve their homelessness situation. So we need the city, we need the state, we need philanthropy, we need foundations to step up and provide unrestricted funds so that we can serve these folks more dynamically. And I'd be happy if you want to connect the person who wrote that letter to me. And I also want to mention before I leave, there is a real coalition of providers that -- I'm sure you've heard from some of them today that do a lot of really great work here in

[5:14:22 PM]

Austin. I could go down and name them all between caritas, front steps, integral care, just really wonderful people doing really good work. We need more money in those organizations in order to solve this problem. But it's solvable and you have the right people here to do it. So thanks for your time.

>> Harper-madison: Thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

>> Mayor Adler: Sir, sorry for the -- you got caught there standing, and I apologize for that. Please introduce yourself. And then you will have a chance to speak, sir.

>> Okay. If I could address the chamber, if there's any homeless here please raise your hand. I would like for us to be counted, please, numberwise anyway. Thank you. Hello, my name is John McWilliams. I have -- I am one of your downtown homeless residents. I have PTSD, I'm bipolar and

[5:15:25 PM]

I am addicted to k2. I am here right now because I have seen everything from four years on, I've seen the way this city has grown, I've seen the population grow. Mr. Mayor, council, you do not have a homeless problem, okay? You don't. This is not -- this is nothing. This is nothing. It's really nothing. You have no homeless problem here. What you do is you have an opportunity. You have an opportunity to make history.

[Buzzer sous]

-- Itself. By sitting there and you could -- all of you could do it right now, end it right now. It's so easy.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

>> You just have to move, that's it. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Come on up, please, and introduce yourself.

>> Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Mike burnet.

[5:16:27 PM]

How do you make a child's life who is experiencing the ravages of homelessness worse? You expose them to the in incore ridge I believe element of the community. The homeless intervention team has identified three groups they have identified as incorrigible. The homeless community, the homeowner community and the business community have made exactly the same statement. They are all concerned about how that component of the indigent community is going to be managed. So I appreciate your time this evening, but that's a question I would like to see answered as you try and go forward. Given I'm from district 5 and I'm not particularly a great proponent of it, I guess I would have to support Ms. Kitchen's proposal this evening. Even though I find it to be

[5:17:29 PM]

a ltle draconian. Thank you for your time.

[Buzzer sounds]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Is Diane Clark here? Why don't you come on down.

>> Harper-madison: Mayor Adler, not just for me with my hearing issues, but I know there are other people in the room who have -- struggle with hearing. It's really difficult to hear the people giving testimony when other folks in the room are speaking and it's loud. So if you could ask conversations to go out in the lobby.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. That makes sense. People please do that. Apparently I'm not picking up sounds from outside, so point them out to me because I'm missing them.

>> Harper-madison: You want me to be a hall monitor? I'm not doing that.

[Laughter].

>> Mayor Adler: Before you start, is Diane Clark here? What about Kathie Mitchell? Is Sheri Taylor here? What about Janie Villareal? What about Steven potter.

[5:18:38 PM]

And is will Hyatt here. You will be up fourth.

>> This is what I carry with me with my sleeping bag. I've been woken up before at 2:00 in the morning sleeping in front of a church and was told someone called the police and I have to move. They don't care where I go, just go somewhere else. So you go somewhere else. So I really thank the city council for what you did in June because because that's a big problem for the homeless is where can we just stop because we're always moving. As far as criminal activity, though, we're not the ones ones -- we're not the ones doing those things. None of the people that I know are the ones stealing. I can't -- we're so marginalized and we're

[5:19:40 PM]

people. We need help. So -- we're citizens and we're your neighbors. We go to the store and we pay sales tax on everything we buy, and we buy plots of stuff.

[Buzzer sounds] Thank you.

[Applause].

>> Mayor Adler: Councilmembers, it's 5:20 now. I think that they've brought in boxed lunches in the back back, so as to enable us to just let the public continue to testify. My recommendation would be if you need to step off the dais we have the ability. They have a television playing so you don't have to miss anybody's testimony. You can see and hear everyone that speaks. We have 74 people, a little over an hour testimony if everybody is here. So if it's okay with the dais, we're just going to continue to call people up to speak. Leave if you need to and then come back.

>> Garza: Mayor, I had a

[5:20:41 PM]

question real quick. So after the testimony are we going to start deliberating or are we going to stop and go to Friday?

>> Mayor Adler: We'll stop and go to Friday. Ms. Mitchell, you have a minute. >>

>> [Inaudible - no mic].

>> I'm Kathie Mitchell. Like so many who have stood here before you, I am a long time Austin resident. I have been in my district, district 1, for more than 30 years. I've been in the same house. I'm a homeowner. You may not know these things about me because I don't generally front that kind of personal information. But I believe as much as anyone in the community I represent who we are and I hope and pray that we represent who we want to be. I'm here today because I've been working very hard to bring you the voices of a lot of people who are not in the room today. I'd like to give you a list of groups that have

[5:21:42 PM]

supported the following basic things that you've done. So they support clarifying decriminalization, but they oppose the areas -- recriminalization. They support a new funding. They support efforts to address current health and safety issues with trash pickup, access to toilets and storage lockers and they agree that as these initiatives roll out, decriminalization is the most important thing we can all do to help our homeless neighbors move forward successfully. These groups include stonewall Democrats, university Democrats, Austin environmental Democrats, tejano yeses, Austin young Democrats, Austin coalition, just liberty, democratic socialists of America, indivisible Austin and undoing white supremacy

[5:22:43 PM]

Austin. I was delighted to read and you probably have as well, but I just want to make sure that last night the university of Texas student government voted to support your rollback of the criminalization. They -- they passed ar 3 supporting Austin's current decriminalization of sitting, lying and camping where there is no public safety issue. I think that's incredibly important because I think you've heard --

[buzzer sounds] Okay. And there are more groups who support more similar things. Sorry I didn't get to them all.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. You've handed something out on the dais. I think we all have that now, Ms. Mitchell. Go ahead, sir.

>> My name is teacher potter. I am -- Steven potter. I am homeless. I am also a homeless advocate. I wear a lot of hats, among them homes, not handcuffs and Austin's homelessness advisory council. First I'd like to say that I support the latest phased

[5:23:44 PM]

approach, but more than that I would like to propose a way forward. Austin is very full of very creative, very intelligent folks whose very existence relies on their ability to problem solve. We have as councilmember Flannigan has suggested, we have the tools. We have the homelessness strategy officer. We have we have the Austin innovation office. Use them. I'm proposing a series of ongoing ideation sessions. Bring the community together as a whole and workshop actual solutions. I thank you for your time. To the homeless out there, one, believe that things can change for the better.

[Buzzer sounds]

[5:24:44 PM]

>> Mayor Adler:

[Indiscernible], Chris Stacy, Joyce stats. Why don't you come up. You have time donated from Richard Barton. So you have one minute. Is Celeste Wiley here? Will chance, Julie Mandell? Bethany Carson. Okay. Why don't you come on down. You will be the third speaker to speak. What about -- you have time donated by Rachel manning. Is Rachel still here? No?

>> [Inaudible - no mic].

>> Mayor Adler: Is Bryant register here? What about Ellen Williams. Why don't you come on down? You will be the fourth

[5:25:47 PM]

speaker.

>> Garza: [Inaudible].

>> Mayor Adler: I'll ask them their names when they come up, but thank you for pointing that out. Please introduce yourself, sir. You have one minute.

>> Okay. We commend the council for trying to solve this --

>> Mayor Adler: What's your name, please?

>> Will Hyatt, house the homeless. We're not here to protest. We're here to bring some solutions with house the homeless.org and with the universal living wage.org. Those that can work, have a place to work, and a chance to work at a wage that can sustain housing and those that cannot have a place to go where the money can support housing, flying community first. We need to bring the churches together to work with this tough issue and to promote the police as having difficulty with the liaison position, we want to supply them with ways to use the services with the area churches. They treat people with

[5:26:47 PM]

respect and dignity and I think they should be commended with that. The churches have to be a big key in all of this. Jesus said the lord will always be with you. This is a poverty issue primarily and for those who want to work, we need to get them to work. For those who don't want to work, and there is an element of that, we need to inspire them to work and work their way out of that poverty situation.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Ms. Stats, you is have two minutes.

>> I'm Joyce stats from district 10. I'm one of those old white people that Chaz referred to. But I don't think I'm disconnected. I'm trying to stay connected with the homeless in our neighborhood and help with programs to help them get away from homelessness. I agree with the message board post that councilmembers Flannigan and Ellis put in this week. Before you enact new ordinances be sure we have the resources, the services, the places for people to go. And the new resolution from councilmember tovo seems to take that into account. So I think that's going in the right direction.

[5:27:48 PM]

The city has just hired a homelessness strategy officer. We need to give her time to get up to speed and be able to bring us a good set of solutions that we can work on. And so I would recommend that as you go forward with your three-phase process, work on phase 1 now, but please let the details of phases two and three to her before you put them into the code of an ordinance. We really need all of the intelligence we can find to go after this effort. And one of the things I would ask that you add to your resolution is transparency for us all so that there is one place where the public can go, where the police can go, where anyone can go to see the rules, the regulations. I don't want to go to 16 different places to find out who has regulated what about this homelessness effort. And we need a good place where we can go for real data. Real definitions. What do we mean by zero veteran homelessness? There's a definition there that doesn't mean zero. But what does zero mean? So we need definitions, we

[5:28:49 PM]

need clarification on the restrictions that all of us can use as we work with and advocate for our homeless neighbors. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[Applause]. Please introduce yourself. You have one minute. Two minutes, rather.

>> My name is Julia Mandell. And I live in district 9 and I oppose any further restrictions that further criminalizes homeless. I want to thank the council for the progress made in June and I'm asking you not to unundo it. I'm here because I believe that every single resident of Austin has an equal right to exist and to occupy space. I work in an office in west campus and never once have I had a negative reaction with someone experiencing homeless in the area and never once have I felt unsafe. As a gender nonconforming person I'm pretty used to being made to feel uncomfortable and unwanted in public spaces. And never once have I been made to feel that way by

[5:29:50 PM]

someone experiencing homelessness. Just today walking to work on Guadalupe, I met eyes with a man resting in the shade and I thought maybe today is the day that I will have interactions in a the room that so many people are fearful of. But he just gave me a big smile and said happy Wednesday. I'm one of the people that these ordinances is supposed to make feel comfortable in one. One of the people the city tries to make welcome at the expense of others. An educated, young, white professional. But I don't accept injustice being done supposedly on my behalf. I don't believe I have the right to not see the ways in which inequity and racism force people out of their homes and keep them there. The discomfort I feel at seeing someone in pain is not more important than someone's dignity and their right to just exist in this city. I want so see my city council providing homes, not resorting to policing as a solution to homelessness. Thank you.

[5:30:50 PM]

[Applause].

>> Mayor Adler: Would you state your name, please?

>> My name is Bethany Carson. I'm a resident of district 4. So our public conversation opened today and has been repeatedly peppered with this racist trope of black men as a sexual danger to white women. And this is something that has been used to justify some of the most brutal acts of violence against black people in this country. So I'm here to say there's a difference between being uncomfortable or uncertain and being unsafe. And no one is safer when we criminalize the existence of people in our community. Vagrancy laws are something that proliferated as a part of black codes that were created to criminalize and control newly freed black people in our country. The leaders who created these codes also talked about taking back their cities, their governments for white people.

[5:31:51 PM]

This is white supremacy. White women cannot take back Austin because it was never ours. First it belonged to indigenous folks and in Austin's early days it was a sanctuary for black people and home to multiple freed men's towns. Decisions by those who have held council seats before you all have continued to zone and displace and police these communities out of their homes. The ordinances criminalizes homelessness are part of this legacy. Continued subdivisions to eliminate affordable housing in east Austin like the Riverside corridor development are part of this legacy. We should not aspire to go back as a nation or a city to how we have addressed these issues before, which was harmful and effective and racist. Getting rid of these ordinances has evidently been a catalyst for action. Now homeless folks are visible instead of being disappeared into jails. They're would coming forward with -- they're coming forward with ideas. We need this. Let's continue to foster the

[5:32:51 PM]

trust that it will take and work with our homeless neighbors for solutions instead of against them. Thank you.

[Applause].

[Buzzer sounds]

>> My name is Ellen Williams and I live in oak hill. And I've gone to several of these meetings and one of the things that I think is really lacking as a previous engineer is data. I don't see any of the statistics. I hear a lot of emotion both ways and I hear, you know, if this happens you're going to be homeless if this happens. And then I heard that today that they've gone and they've looked underneath Ben white and they haven't counted them. Why are they at Ben white? Are they, you know -- did they get out of ash? Did they lose their job because of medical? Do they have some kind of a problem? Is it va? Why don't you have statistics? That would be easy. I think that that would be

[5:33:53 PM]

the first step, how can you get a root cause of the problem unless you address what it really is? What is it? 25% because they came from ash or they have some kind of medical problem? We address that this way.

[Buzzer sounds] Okay. Thanks.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[Applause].

>> Flannigan: I want to thank the last speaker for what she said. I've been asking those same questions about data and with my conversations with the new homeless strategy officer, she reiterated that data is the most important thing and that's how we're going to know how to ratio the solutions to the problems and all the things. We're in complete agreement on needing to get to the data.

>> Ellis: I want to take a moment real fast. Could you please send your information to my office so that we could be in communication? I like where you're headed with this and want to further that conversation. Thanks.

>> Mayor Adler: Thanks. Is Christy Mckenzie here? What about Andrew Mayer?

[5:34:57 PM]

Why don't you come on down. Is Florent Marquis here? Florence Marquis? What about Sue Gabriel? Melissa Galeski? Kathie Carr. Why don't you come up to this podium, Ms. Carr. Is Sheryl Greer here? Is Julietta here? What about Kristin Lenow? What about Erica Galindo?

>> Here.

>> Mayor Adler: Why don't you come down. You have time donated from Christina Parker. Okay. So Miss Galindo, you will have two minutes. Julietta, you had time

[5:35:58 PM]

donated from Glenn Washburn. Is Glenn still here? No. So you will have one minute. Go ahead, please introduce yourself. You have a minute.

>> Hi, I'm Andrew Mayer. Thank you for letting me speak. I would want to reiterate what Alicia Weigel said earlier today that Kitchen and Tovo's proposal would effectively recriminalize homelessness in most of Austin. As all the little elements add up to where is anyone going to live if they can't have a place to live? Anyway, really this -- considering this is basically going back to the way things were before when they were not working, it's the wrong solution. There's -- the city has to do whatever it can to make -- to move to making homes available for all Austinites. And beyond that, I mean, you know, I think this is something that even goes beyond the city to where the state needs to be working on homelessness and rehabilitative justice for

[5:36:58 PM]

everyone that has much more substantial issues that would prevent them from getting in --

[buzzer sounds] Like in society. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Why don't you come on up, introduce yourself.

>> My name is Kathie Carr. I'm an artist and also a former homeless person. I have -- homeless people are all of your districts because we go everywhere. I had a fire and I lost my home, and I went to Round Rock and I tried to apply for a Habitat for Humanity. I could not pay the \$600 for the taxes alone. I could pay to get a house. I went to Echo and I was not helped. I know that they also have like case management and that's an extra pay that somebody could have a house with. And also that the city had a waiting list for seven years and whenever you would try to get housing you couldn't get it. So it's really a housing

[5:38:00 PM]

problem. I don't know why you have a resolution that you can't stay in the recreation centers. They're all over town. Every district has one. They have a shower and they have restrooms. And I think it's the compassionate thing to do. They could clean up everything and be on their way and not interfere with the day use.

[Buzzer sounds] I would like for you to stop the war against the poor.

[Applause].

>> Mayor Adler: Is Sheri Taylor now in the room? Is Sheri Taylor in the room now? Are you Sheri Taylor? No?

>> [Inaudible - no mic].

>> Mayor Adler: So you had time that was donated from Steve Harrell. Is Mr. Harrell here? So you will have one minute. You can get in line, please, as well. Thank you. I think you were next and then we'll come back over here.

>> Thank you. I am the Texas director and one of the co-founders of united we dream. I am in Ann kitchen's district. We organize mainly immigrant youth and provide leadership

[5:39:02 PM]

trainings, but we're here to say thank you for taking the courageous action that you took in June. We strongly support the decriminalization of homelessness and stand against the war against the poor, immigrants of color -- immigrants and people of color in this country. We urge you strongly not to vote for any restrictions on camping, sitting or lying down. We must invest in real solutions such as camping safety, sanitary and ensure that there's -- that we're providing housing for all, including those who are undocumented. We strongly believe that policing or criminalizing the issue will not get us out of the issue and real solutions that actually see and respect the humanity of homeless folks will actually make a difference in our city and we are really concerned about -- husband

[buzzer sounds]

-- Kitchen's prohibitions that she introduced.

>> Mayor Adler: Please introduce yourself.

>> Do I have time donated.

>> Mayor Adler: That's

[5:40:02 PM]

correct, two.

>> Thank you. My name is Erica Galindo. Good evening, council. I'm the organizing program manager at [indiscernible] For reproductive equity. And today I'm testifying in strong support of decriminalizing homelessness and asking that you do not backtrack on the progress the city made earlier this June. We urge you to vote no on any new restrictions on camping, sitting or lying down. At the fund we operate a hotline where we hear countless stories of people who are doing everything in their power to access a safe abortion and we often hear directly from people who are without permanent housing and many who consider themselves homeless. Accessing abortion care in every Texas city is already extremely difficult due to the plethora of state mandated obstacles put forth by legislators, but for our callers experiencing homelessness, gaining the care they need is next to impossible. We're here to advocate for those callers who have a basic right to bodily autonomy, dignity, compassion and freedom.

[5:41:02 PM]

Concerns regarding sexual reproductive health are common among women of color experiencing homelessness in particular and disproportionately affect youth, queer gender, nonconforming and trans people. The conditions affecting this community contribute to higher risk of pregnancy complications, miscarriages, unintended pregnancies, sti's and HIV. We want to thank you again for recently taking an historic stand in support of the reproductive health care and we hope you can see this too as part of reproductive justice. We must extend the right to bodily autonomy and dignity for all people. We cannot allow police to once again ticket, arrest and displace people in our community who are forced to live on the streets. We urge you to do everything in your power to ensure all people are able to access the resources, support and care they need without fear of violence or criminalization. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Ms. Taylor, you have a minute.

>> Good afternoon.

[5:42:03 PM]

My name is Taylor, like Taylor Swift. I had the name before she did and she was making bank so I just dropped my first name and I just go by Taylor. I'm here to advocate for education and air conditioning because the children in this town have access to everything they want and they are seeing all these testimonies of adults transferring against other adults for the right to be people. So I'm hoping that you might consider use of resources like civil air patrol, which I'm an officer, and capital idea, which is proposing free education, free four month bus pass, free tuition, free textbooks, free case management so we can bring all of our citizenry up to positive experience as college carrying card members since we are a college town. And imagine all the folks that got up here who have college degrees to protest what's not happening. If they donated all this

[5:43:04 PM]

time to going and coaching somebody and tutoring somebody and mentoring somebody.

[Buzzer sounds] So I hope we can get that going. Thank you very much.

>> Mayor Adler: Is florent marquis here? What about Ashley loftest? Mike Pellerin? Come on down. Is Vernon Nicholas here?

>> Harper-madison: Mr. Mayor, can I real quick ask Taylor a question? Is that air conditioning copyrighted? Did you do that or did you get that from somebody else?

>> [Off mic]. I am a gulf war veteran. When I relocated after leaving here in '91 and I went to Virginia, I was going like where is the air, heir. What is happening to folks. I was like our kids see how

[5:44:06 PM]

we act no matter what comes out of our mouth. I said we can do heir conditioning, we want them to have the best and we want our grandkids to have the best so we have to show them the best. So heir conditioning came up. And it occurred to me when every other corner in this town, like in Virginia, there's a church. So we invite people to come and sing, we can use singing to heal. And if you listen to the lyrics you can heal from within instead of paying the braces for the kids or the therapist or the boats and whatever else they buy when you go to those meetings because if they're sowsseed to the clouds they have issues too.

>> Harper-madison: Thank you very much. I appreciate it. It is very clever and you should copyright it.

[Applause].

>> Mayor Adler: Is Ashley loftest here? Mike Pellerin? Mr. Nicholas? You will be up in just one moment. Ahmad Ranson.

[5:45:06 PM]

What about Frederick Daniels? Letosha Taylor? Mccue Douglas? Why don't you come on down, sir? Is Richard Sasser here? Richard Sasser? What about Paula cothman. You will be the third speaker up. Third speaker. You have time donated from Janie Villareal. Is Janie here? No? What about liane starkly? Is she here? So you will have two minutes when you come up. The fourth speaker in line is Sarah Morgan Livingston. Is Sarah Morgan Livingston here? What about Lisa gale Sykes? Why don't you come on down. You will be the fourth speaker. You have time donated from Samantha Robles?

[5:46:06 PM]

Is she still here? You will have one minute. Sir, you have a minute. Please introduce yourself.

>> Hi. My name is Mike. I'm 67 years old. I came to Austin in February because I was born in Texas. I came to see my dying mother. I have -- I have section eight federal assisted housing, however they dropped the ball and I was homeless here for two months. So I've been homeless throughout my life and I just wanted to stand up for the homeless today. And sometimes people treat their dogs better than the homeless, I experienced this. I just want you to know. There's a lot of talented people out there that are homeless. They have good hearts. You can learn a lot about faith, love, truth, and I wish y'all would not politicalize this. It's not really a political issue I don't think, this is a humanitarian issue, you know.

[5:47:07 PM]

And that's mainly what I wanted to say. And also sleep is kind of an issue when you're homeless.

[Buzzer sounds] We need to find safe places to sleep.

>> Mayor Adler: Yes, sir, please introduce yourself.

>> I'm Mike Mccue and I'm at the arch right now. As far as your Austin echo, I had to complain about Ann Howard, who seems her only talent was to take her 86,000-dollar salary and turn it up to 200,000. After miss the appointments and stuff I simply got a phoned in coordinated assessment. My problem was I had supposedly an inflamed gallbladder. April 15th I was supposed to start a job with a company up there in tech ridge. Essentially I was told that basically I had an inflamed gallbladder so I needed to have that surgery and so

[5:48:07 PM]

forth. I didn't want to do it that night. It's major surgery and stuff. But I could have been working at basically \$15 an hour and I could have saved basically getting kicked out of my apartment. I'm homeless because of an eviction. I have another history, basically I was at the arch in 2016 -- about.

[Buzzer sounds]

-- For the same thing, same reason. Basically your services don't fit me, okay? They don't fit a lot of people --

>> Mayor Adler: Tell me what about our services don't fit you?

>> Essentially, okay, I do I.T. Support. I worked for the va. I got that job out of the arch pretty much and went down there on Woodward and basically worked with our national help desk. Your cap metro

system doesn't service a lot of the areas that I've been offered jobs at. , Out on 360, up towards, you know, northern parts of

[5:49:08 PM]

Austin. West of mopac. I've been offered probably at least 20, 30 positions that I couldn't take because I couldn't get there. I need a car, but there's no program to basically put me back into a car after I was living in one and it got vandalized and I lost it. You know, the last time I went homeless in 2016. So ultimately, people -- I apologize. Essentially I came here to work for Dell in the summer of 2000 and I was too much of a workaholic to pay attention to this council and how it basically continually dropped the ball as far as my concerns went. And that's where for that whole 20 years. So yeah, I'm not chronickicly homeless. I've been through that argument before, okay? When I was on the street, I was basically jumping on the night owl buses and riding them all night just to stay

[5:50:08 PM]

out of the rain or whatever, okay?

>> Mayor Adler: All right sir, thank you very much.

>> Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: You have two minutes, ma'am. Please introduce yourself.

[Applause].

>> Hi. I'm Paula cothman. I'm neutral because a lot of these solutions are good, but I have some different ones. As a former development direct four foundation for the homeless, I can tell you that the empathy that you feel for the people that are experiencing homelessness today is overpowered by the joy that you feel when you help a family get into a home. Many of our clients became homeless suddenly because their landlords had been offered money to buy their house. And so they could not find another property with equal rents, and I also live in Travis heights. I'm looking at your land development rewrite, and you have a lot of unintended consequences.

[5:51:11 PM]

Often our clients lose their homes because their landlords are no longer able to keep those homes. We have a lot of multi-million-dollar houses next door to cheap rents. So it would be equal instead of having the diversity in the neighborhood that we enjoy. So one of the ways that you could get more affordable housing is to make it easier for us to create ads and to rent them at affordable rates and make sure that

whenever you create an affordable housing unit, you must subtract every affordable housing unit that you get rid of in order to be honest. Also, people are not really talking about encouraging home ownership. I purchased my first home with an affordable housing grant and when I sold that

[5:52:11 PM]

home I paid that grant back. Single-family houses are people can buy with an affordable housing grant, and a lot of times these have the predatory property management fees. Husband husband that a lot of condos may have.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

>> So as a landlord I pledge -- I pledge seven percent of my net proceeds to donate to homeless causes. And I challenge other landlords to do the same.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much for that offer. Next speaker, come down and introduce yourself. Was Samantha row bless here? She wasn't here? You have one minute.

>> Not all people, not all homeless people are criminals or dangerous. Not all homeless people are dirty, not all homeless people are contagious and sick. Not all homeless people drink alcohol and use street

[5:53:11 PM]

drugs. Not all homeless people destroy property. Not all homeless people are stupid. Not all homeless people are a menace to society. Not all homeless people loiter. Stop discriminating against the homeless. It is a violation of the U.S. Constitution. It is time for austinites to make a change towards building economical housing that people can afford. Why? Because we are human. We are people.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[Applause]. Is Eric Navarro here? Why don't you come down. You had time donated from Joey. So you will have two minutes, Mr. Navarro. Is gio okan here? What about Bonnie Mcallister Mcallister? Bonnie Mcallister? What about Danny Henderson?

[5:54:13 PM]

Mr. Henderson? You had time donated from two people, Lisa Walsh, okay, and then Paul Mullin. So you will have three minutes. Mr. Henderson, you will be our second speaker. Is Lorilee swabek here? You will have one minute. And finally, Doug brown, the fourth speaker here. You will have a minute, will be the fourth speaker. Go ahead, sir.

>> Hello, my name is Eric Navarro and I've never done this before. I would like to say first and foremost that being homeless is tiring. I feel that reversing the ordinance that you guys had put in place back in June is very courageous, but as well as reversing the laws would be an inconvenience to an already inconvenient situation. Being woken up in the middle of your nap is hard and hard to fall back to sleep especially if you have work or school in the morning. Also if we take into consideration some aspects

[5:55:14 PM]

of the United Nations, the good neighbor agreements and policies and just be nice humans we can resolve this in a Progressive and civil manner. I would also like to throw that idea out that building homes with hemp, hemp solution within those homes, hemp buildings and apartments for this matter I think would be Progressive and it would be futuristic to reliving as well. And I would just like to thank you guys again for your courage.

[Buzzer sounds]

>> Mayor Adler: Go ahead, sir, please introduce yourself.

>> My name is Danny Henderson. And I lead a street ministry called up from the ashes that serves the homeless. I live in my pickup truck. Before that I was in the woods, I slept behind dumpsters. Eaten out of dumpsters, you know, out of need.

[5:56:16 PM]

I represent the homeless community. I was at the public forum at St. Ed's two weeks ago. I was appalled when the director of Caritas said we can't answer some of your questions because we have no one from the homeless community with that experience on our panel. I'm the one that stood up and says, I have that experience. I'd be happy to answer questions. Everybody just looked at me like I was kind of -- you know, what's he doing here? I believe that people who have never experienced it don't have a clue to what's really needed. Now, I've heard a lot of things today, I've heard some good things, I've heard some things I've disagreed with, however, I believe that the homeless and leaders in the homeless community, which I am one, I serve the homeless all the way from Montopolis all the way up Ben White Corridor,

[5:57:18 PM]

up 290 into Oak Hill. You talk to the homeless out there they know who Preacher is, that's my street name. 31 years on the streets, 26 of them serving my brothers and sisters. And empowering my brothers and sisters also to be a part of the solution. I've got the only mobile loaves and fishes truck team, food truck team, that is staffed by all homeless volunteers. We go out every month. Yesterday --

the night before last I went and bagged ice, a half a ton of ice. I emptied out an ice machine. I have an ice machine I empty twice a week. I go out there and night and I bag ice. I hustle to pay for money for dry ice to put ice inside the coolers with the ice I pack. And I take it out and I give it out. I don't have any help with that, financially or rarely even, you know, hands and feet to come along and help. I do this from the streets. I lead from the streets. I lead from a position of

[5:58:19 PM]

knowledge and experience. I'd like to be a part of these public forums and be a part of that panel in the future moving forward. I also -- I want to be -- get more involved with the other groups that are supporting the homeless that I've heard speak today. And that's where I'm at. But I'd like to be a part of the solution. I encourage the homeless and give them the opportunities to be a part of their own solution. And I've been working for years and years to change

public perception Adler: And turn into a more positive look.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you, sir. Thank you.

[ Applause ]

>> Mayor Adler: Please introduce yourself.

>> I am --

>> Mayor Adler: Hang on, one second --

>> Yes. For the last two speakers I wanted to tell Mr. Navarro thanks for coming up to speak

[5:59:19 PM]

for the first time. I know it is intimidating but that is how this thing works. That's how we govern our municipality with the contributions from everybody in the community regardless of what your position is. So thank you a for stepping up. And then also, I would like to connect with you after, because wrong it is necessarily fair that you should have the hustle to do the work we purport to be so important so I would like very much to connect with you after to see how we can make it a more official capacity and you get the kind of help you need to do that good work. Thank you.

[ Applause ]

>> Mayor Adler: Please introduce yourself, sir.

>> I am Doug brown. I have lived here since '92. I am against allowing anyone to set up a permanent camp on the sidewalks. I just think the it is wrong solution. I hear about humanity and I don't think it is

humane to tell somebody a that is homeless, go live in a tent on the street. So it sounds like the objective

[6:00:20 PM]

of the homeless voices here is to force everyone to see the homeless and that will somehow force a solution. To see the homeless. That's not a tactic that works well with me. I think that is doing a disservice. I think that's a poor tactic to force a solution. It sounds like what I am hearing people want is the solution is give them a home. I agree that in principle. Their homes should be a legitimate shelter on a property zoned for residence, not a tent on a sidewalk. But there is a problem, I own a few single-family homes downtown here. I could give one -- to a homeless family, they would have to pay the taxes, that would be 1,500 dollars a month, 50 homeless, they wouldn't be homeless if they could --

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Thank you, sir. Ma'am --

>> Yes. Please introduce yourself.

>> My name is Laura Lee.

[6:01:21 PM]

I appreciate hearing people speak on decriminalization. Thank you for enlarging me on that today. But as a fair exchange please consider that it is an issue of volume of more homeless people being shipped here. Change the ordinance and they will come. We have been somewhat successful in the city in helping our homeless but with this change we will be overwhelmed, discrimination in cities happens with housing, partnerships should happen with businesses, and with people like Doug Gurkin and this other gentlemen with community first and other interested charitable organizations. I am not interested, I am not impressed Bien stating policies that leave citizens out. A camping ordinance for the homeless appears to be good thing but it is a smoke screen. Appearances are cheap. Important initiatives are expensive. Tomorrow there will be a UT student led protest against this

[6:02:21 PM]

city council, against the rezoning of 1,300 units of a affordable housing on Riverside. Okay. So -- I am just Natasha harbor Madison and just Jimmy Flannigan, I am just Paige Ellis.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

>> This is unjust.

[ Applause ]

>> Mayor Adler: Is Katie -- here? Katie?

>> Gerardo Alcon? Greg Wilson? Siewk McMahon I think donated time. Nancy Seliger? Jennifer Campbell? Carrie Abraham Begovic? David Hernandez? Alicia Castillo.

[6:03:24 PM]

Okay. Stay there for just a second, Ms. Campbell. Alicia Castillo? Why don't you come on down. Is Abuie Hamwin here? I know I butchered your name and I apologize for that. Is he here? A Bouif?

-- How about Mark Al Louvre Owe? Why don't you come down here and you will be the third speaker. Is Sara -- you will be the fourth speaker. Go ahead, please.

>> Good evening, my name is Jennifer Campbell. A lot of data has been gathered and many reports have been written recently about Austin homelessness so highlighting the following quo takings, the national -- strongly recommends not implementing any policies that million lies behaviors with homelessness such as sleeping or sitting on the sidewalk. Persons experiencing ticketed

[6:04:25 PM]

and arrested and jailed under the no sit, no light, no camping ordinances but without services they can't end their homelessness and continue to sniej and out of jails, taxing public safety departments, that's the action plan to end homeless. A criminal history creates additional bear groars housing and into jobs for people -- city order fans that limit or ban camping and sitting or lying down in public spaces may create bear yes, sir for people as they attempt to exit homelessness because they can lead to a criminal record or arrest warrant even if a citation does not result in a criminal record it does not appear to be an effective mean of connecting that individual to the service this is he need nor efficient use of city resources. That's the homeless audit report. This did not end homelessness but rolling back the amendments will extend homelessness. Thank you so much for your time.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Please introduce yourself.

>> I am aish raqaa cities owe with the criminal justice coalition and I want to support the decriminalization of our

[6:05:27 PM]

most vulnerable populations here in Austin. Wayn't to ask that you all will please stand firm in your conviction to solve the problem of home insecurity in Austin. Adhere to the U.S. Constitution, and refuse to criminalize existence, dehumanizing electric is focused on making people seem less than human, not worthy of humane treatment and when this is done successfully, it creates something called moral exclusion, and we can agree based on basic morals that people have rights which include the right to not be violated and to be safe from harm. Successful dehumanation happen in Nazi Germany and happened with indigenous people when we call them savages and it cannot be -- we cannot allow it to happen here in Austin a with our very own neighbors. Who are experiencing homelessness and disproportionately of whom are people of color, who have just experienced this type of dehumanation way too long. Everyone deserves to feel safe, those experiencing homelessness and those who are housed in Austin a and the decisions that you made in someone were

[6:06:28 PM]

research and evidence based and ultimately keep -- help accomplish that goal of keeping everyone safe. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Ms. Littlefield, do you want to

--

>> --

>> Mayor Adler: And that.

>> And that echo, I am here to state again that echo support of the changes that were made in June and we hope that the process you go through this week will -- will not enact ordinances that again make it more difficult to house people W that being said I want to thank every single one of you, the stakeholders who have reached out to your offices and you all reaching out to us. It has been great, I am so impressed with your dedication on this issue in trying to end homelessness, the same thing with the stakeholders on both sides of the aisle. 30 seconds about a friend of mine asks asked me to check on a campsite in southwest Austin six weeks ago after the ordinance were changed.

[6:07:29 PM]

Which went down and found 0 a campsite, his man was Tim, he had a bracelet on his hand, and a scrub I am a volunteer, tell me what happened.

>> I have been here since March. No problems. No -- nothing wrong --

>> Mayor Adler: Tell me what happened.

>> Mr. -- His name was Tim. Someone came to his camp about four nights before and stolen something. Two nights before I met him, he saw flashlights coming down path, and he ran. He got -- he quickly knew, realized it was police officers who were coming down the path. He goes I had a choice to make, stop or keep running, I made the choice to keep running. I got lost, I made a left when I should have made a right and ran off into a 15-foot cement pond. Star flight to come get me and take me out. When I was released two days later the morning I met him they put him in a cab and released back into the parking lot of specks down there at Brody and 290. He fell asleep, his camp had been ransacked while he was gone for to the two days when he woke up there were two police

[6:08:30 PM]

officers on top of him saying here is your ticket from two nights ago for camping, and here is your ticket for this morning for camping. He was in sunset valley. And six weeks ago he was given two tickets for camping. And he ran. And he hurt himself. We took the tickets we are trying to get them resolved. We got him a new caseworker and we moved his camp and I think that's a good example of what you all did and why you are doing it. Thank you for your time and what you are doing.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

>> Hi, thanks my name is Sarah woman bolt and live in district 5. I am not a homeowner because it is quite expensive to buy a home in the city but I am grateful that I have a home and I do empathize with our folks who have shared tonight so courageously about the struggles of being homeless in the city

[6:09:30 PM]

and I support the decriminalization measures that you all passed in June and I urge you not to add more restrictions, because I think as we heard tonight that people with housing privilege are ready to weaponize that privilege and I know in my neighborhood on the corner of -- and south ferris, I have seen evidence of people being verbally and physically abused, homeless folks being abused by people with homes, and I don't want to encourage that behavior anymore, so please stay strong. I support what you all are doing and thank you very much.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[ Applause ] Is Carly Joe Dickerson here? What about Lisa gale Sykes? What about Sarah black? Is that a yes for Sarah black? Come on down, please. Before you speak, though, is

[6:10:32 PM]

griffin chambers -- come down up, come on down. Wait there for just one second, please. Is griffin chambers here? What about -- are you Mr. Chambers? No? Okay. What about Kate raziati? Erica Galindo? Bob libel? Come on down, sir. What about Andrea Brower? Or Timothy bray? And why don't you bring him in. Okay. Is Justin berry here? What about alley Harper?

[6:11:34 PM]

Josiah Stevenson? Okay. Why don't you come on down. Go ahead, ma'am. You have one minute.

>> I have an extra minute. Julia Reyes.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. And someone gave you time.

>> Julian Reyes.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Thank you. Go ahead. You have two minutes.

>> I want to start off by saying happy birthday to the air force. Its 72 years old today. I came to Austin because my father was ordered to the city in 1970 and -- transient. He bought a house in southwest Austin in 1981. And he died and then in 2003 they came for me as a black person in a nice neighborhood. They started criminalizing for being black and I didn't know about it until 2005. In 2005, I was a victim of domestic violence and the police

[6:12:37 PM]

officers didn't give me equal protection. They failed to protect me, so one of them said to me the best I can do is to take you to the Salvation Army. So that's how I was recruited to the Salvation Army because denying my rights for -- the civil rights act of 1964. So I finally made it down because they wanted me to a few years ago and so -- and for Christmas -- I just want to say

-- that was Christmas at the Salvation Army. So you, the city, negated -- 33 years of service by my father, they negated my years of my college investigation, all of that, because once the police continued to comment because of

[6:13:38 PM]

your race they can pick you out of a room like this and just pick you up because you are black and make you a charge. That negated my college education because when I apply for a job it says, you know, I have some sort of criminal record. Is that after one minute?

>> Mayor Adler: That was two minutes.

>> Okay. Well, so honor all veterans, even those that didn't buy a house 0 in east Austin.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

>> Thank you a.

>> Mayor Adler: Please introduce yourself.

>> Bob libel, the executive director of -- leadership and also a long time resident of district 7 and so thank you, council member pool for your leadership on this issue. Grass roots leadership is the campaign that we are very much in support of the ordinances that were adopted on June 20th, and are opposed to any roll back of those ordinances. I want to make two quick points,

[6:14:39 PM]

right? One is that criminalizing behavior does not solve the underlying behavior. And we know this from the city's own studies and plenty of research on homelessness. We also know it in the context of drug use and abuse, addiction, we know this in the context of poverty. You can't criminalize your way out of the issue. And so I would urge the city to take that housing and health first approach. And then the second thing I want to say is that -- I have been really ashamed in many ways about some of the rhetoric that we have heard here today. We have heard rhetoric that is called homeless people the criminal element, that had said homeless people uniquely terrorize communities that they are shooting people or being sexual offenders. And I would just really ask us, think we are in a moment in our

[6:15:39 PM]

community, Willie Horton kind of moment where we have a choice and we don't want to Kai to the worst element in our community

--

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

>> So I really appreciate what the council is doing here. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Mr. --

>> You get one minute.

>> I am here on behalf of dashboard member which I signed a letter in support of dab hope not handcuffs. And environmental Democrats that sent in the resolution. Made any changes was back in June. I think we have seen a lot of partisan opportunism, people wanting an excuse to barb Austin bash Austin like we didn't have a problem and now we do. And I would encourage you not to give in to people who are deliberately putting out misinformation or using this as an excuse to fare monger, it is a waste

of resources to attack, to, you know, go after people for just camping or who aren't doing anything wrong, and if we had the resources to go like to badger people we have the resources to deal with any actual problems that exist.

[6:16:39 PM]

And we just need to treat everyone with dignity and respect, we don't need to say one person and one group does this so everyone in that group should be tarred. That is not something that is fair or dignified. I encourage you for courage you had in June and encourage you to keep it up. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Mr. Stephenson you have a minute.

>> I am Stephenson and also on the board of aura and support the decriminalization of the homelessness, the hope not handcuffs coal is.

>> This puts safety, comfort and convenience of the privileged above the safety, comfort and convenience of our most vulnerable neighbors. Number one, that is backwards, number 2, while the link between criminalization and the safety of our neighbors without home is very clear and very devastating, you have seen the video a couple of times, the length, link between criminalization and the link between people like me is tenuous at best. We had people pointing to problems that are on the one hand still illegal and on the other hand were still present a year ago and two years ago and

[6:17:40 PM]

seven years ago when I arrived in Austin and probably before that. This approach didn't work then and it never will. Finally I want to talk about over asses in particular. It is a little strange they are being called out as a high priority to ban lying down when they are out of the sun and rain and probably one of the I guess least bad places for people to be in a lot of ways, from aura's perspective it might be the only thing highways are good for. Thanks.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Is Ryan Simpson here? Amy McCurdy.

>> Is Julie Alexander here?

>> Is Heidi Sloan here? Steve Harrell? Eric Weiss? Hang on one second before you start. Is Cheryl harbor here? Why don't you come on down.

[6:18:42 PM]

Is James Casey here? >>

>> Is James Casey should come into the room. Go ahead, sir.

>> Hello. In the interview homeless persons said just give us a chance and see what happens. Revising the camping ordinance after only three months is not giving Austin's population a chance. Three months is not enough time to change one's life situation from homelessness to residential stability. And as we heard before, laws that make homelessness a crime do more to perpetuate homelessness than to solve it. They serve as barriers to finding services, employment and permanent home. But in the end, camping ordinances work programs and shelters are not the final solution. The final solution to help solve homelessness is just more affordable housing. And I think all of you can think about that in the coming weeks. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[6:19:43 PM]

Introduce yourself, please.

>> Hi, my name is Julia -- and I am a -- in the district -- I -- I want to thank you all for decriminalizing homelessness in the first place and I urge you to stand strong in this. I know it has been difficult and a lot of calls and some pretty tough forums, and I have appreciated those who have focused on housing instead of criminalization. Because I think we all know that jails make it harder for people to get into housing I want to say that we know that the majority -- or 43 percent of people that are experiencing homelessness are black but only eight percent of our population is black. There is a clear disparity here. And the safety of and comfort of white women which has been talked about a lot in these discussions has been used to have you had really tremendous violence against black bodies for decades.

[6:20:43 PM]

And centuries. We can't use the comfort of white women to justify violence against Austin nights, experiencing homelessness.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

>> And we can trade homes for handcuffs. Thanks.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Go ahead. Hi, I am Cheryl Halbert. I am a member or I live in district nine. I am for reversing the ordinances. Decriminalizing the homelessness is not the solution, as proven by San Francisco, Seattle, and LA, there is a reason why 30,000 plus signatures on the save Austin now online petition to reverse the ordinance versus the 300 to save them. Which is most of the people in this room, which I realize now that I am here. In 1 my husband and I had a layover the Salt Lake City. There was a sign on the door that said please don't support panhandling, know where it goes, biff to agencies that help those with the greatest need at slc host.org.

>> Why can't we do that?

[6:21:45 PM]

They decreased homelessness by 72 percent over nine years. By funneling their funding towards nonprofit agencies that make a difference. We have great nonprofits here that are doing great work, communities first .. Mobile loads and fishes. Lifeworks, let's follow their example.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Justin berry, is Justin berry here? Why don't you come on down. You have some time from Kristin Smith, is Kristin Smith here, still here?

>> No? What about Patrick Healy? You will have one minute. Before you start, is Darren Victor Martinez here? Why don't you come on down as well. I think it is important to have this discussion. We are facing a big issue with

[6:22:46 PM]

the homeless crisis and the problem is there. In paying -- paying for the resolution under broad strokes, until you take the time to identify the unique make-up of the homeless community and separate what each individual need is, that is where you are going to find your successful solution. There are those that are truly homeless from life circumstances that need help immediately for, due to addiction and other issues in the homeless issue. Those people need help immediately. Yet those people that suffer there drug and alcohol addiction will require their own separate and unique help that is going to be different from someone that is out here homeless because they lost their housing and due to taxation and being taxed out of their rot and losing a spouse and paying all of these medical bills and now they don't have a place to live. Each situation is separate. We need to start focusing on that and also need help the laws, look -- on the sidewalk you will -- carry a ruler before they can enforce anything.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you all.

>> Thank you.

[6:23:48 PM]

>> Mayor Adler:.

>> All right. I just want to start by saying I voted for you. I voted for you, Renteria, I slowed for a lot of you, but since you guys have lifted this ban, I have two children and since then they have had a homeless man drugged out on my roof, cops chasing them, they have seen a naked man across from HEB stuck in a train dancing around, they have also seen defecation. So I don't feel that you have our

best interests, especially as a parent in your ordinances and the ordinance you are pushing through now. And what I am upset about mainly is that you have lifted this ban and to me it seems without any sort of research or just -- you just lifted it up and then you went and did your research. So I just want to though like what is your plan? Where is the housing? What are we doing now? Because I see it getting worse. I don't see it getting any better right now. That's all I have got.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. . Is James Casey here?

[6:24:49 PM]

Mr. Casey, why don't you come on down. As you are coming down, is Sean walker here? Sean walker? Why don't you come down. Is Mike airman here? Mike airman? Eye -- or Mike eyeman. I apologize. Is Chris page here? Okay. Why don't you come down as well. Go ahead, sir.

>> First I want to appreciate you all's time today. It is a hard subject. I first volunteered and was on boards the largest providers of homeless education and training across Austin. I also lived downtown. I have a girlfriend that was recently harassed by a homeless individual in the morning during a jog and I just feel it is very irresponsible to pass these ordinances without lack of information, and the policing

[6:25:50 PM]

line -- you blame each other for this and I think it is really irresponsible that to pass these ordinances without having real supportive services -- I am all for bond issues, housing but we have got to give this money directly to the resources that can do the best job. And so just very disappointed in all of you all and how you have done this. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: What was your name, sir?

>> Dar walker.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Please introduce yourself, sir.

>> James Casey. I am -- if live in live in council member kitchen's district and I am here with dash supremacy Austin and actually to exhort you later but first of all, say it is very froive all of the 0 the hot money in this room, the \$30,000 that -- no, it is easy to get all of those petitions on signature and somebody gives you 30 grand to go get them. It is a little harder for those of us who don't have that kind

[6:26:51 PM]

of money, right? I thank you for really what you did in June, it is one of the experiences of my life I remember being in this room, I remember positively. It was a very courageous. I really hope that the combination of money and fear from mostly white faces does on the compel you to bring criminalation back into people who are unsheltered lives. The people that have the most to fear are the people that do not have a place to go.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

>> Please stop the world of poor. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Mr. Simon. Go ahead. >>

>> Mayor Adler: Sir.

>> Okay. I am Mike eye man and live in district 6, Jimmy. I am a money owner, homeowner I am over 50 and white so I should

[6:27:51 PM]

be angry, right? No. I like to see problems solved. The robs I like to see solved are the trash that is piling up on our highways, under the overpasses and I will volunteer to do it. I have a truck and load up trash bags and do it myself and just help me be protected. How about asking these people why are though homeless? Does anybody say anything about are they on drugs? Are they mentally issues? What made them homeless? Do they want to be helped? Let's ask them that. Need have the data. And actually see if they are going to take the home that you are going to offer them. Lead the horse to water and make them drink. You can't always make them drink. How about using -- Austin is a great for volunteers. Everybody will volunteer for anything. You just have to get them organized to do it. Organize us to do it and let's fix the problems and not make it more problems. Stop pointing fingers at everybody and don't label me as something I am not. Community first, tiny houses, they are cheap, we can build them from recycled materials.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[6:28:51 PM]

>> Austin should do all of this stuff.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you, sir. Thank you. Go ahead, sir. Please introduce yourself.

>> Mayor, mayor.

>> Chris.

>> Ellis: --

>> Sorry. Just quick, you know, it is not too often the D 6ers make their way to city hall two, or three either so I want to thank Mr. Eye man for speaking and encourage you to check out the live stream of the town hall I had in August, it is on my Facebook page where I went 45 minutes and explained the thing you are talking about. You it can be challenging to hear stuff not from the dais in a long day of testimony. The data collection as I said is critical. Our homeless strategy officer agrees with me that it's critical. It is going to take a stap industry evolutions for -- stap industry of solutions for the different types of experiences that people are having that people are having and why it led them to and why they are homeless. That is all the stuff we'll be doing.

[6:29:51 PM]

>> [Off mic].

>> Mayor Adler: Hang on, sir. We've got about Paige, why don't you go ahead and start.

>> Chris Paige, district 1. I do respect the humanity that this council has shown and trying to decriminalize and enable support to come to the homeless that need it. I do think that going forward if there's resolution that unequally treats different geographies within the city that's a recipe for disaster. I think it will just breed tension between neighborhoods. It will increase a sense of disparity and rights between citizens. I do think also that this council needs to make sure that the housing that it is building is housing that neither the neighborhood nor those that are being moved into it are afraid of. If the arch is a place where people are scared to seek the help that they need, then that needs reform and it is now getting it. But also all the new housing capacity that's coming

[6:30:51 PM]

online for permanent supportive housing in particular because that's relevant to my neighborhood, there needs to be adequate safety measures in place to make sure that people who are addicted to drugs are not exposed to people selling them.

[Buzzer sounds] To make sure someone who is suicidal is not going to harm themselves or others. I think we need to make sure that the housing works and that our investment pays off.

[Applause].

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Is grant west here? Come on down. And as you're coming down, is Jackie Bouche here? Come on down. Is Kim Von zoolen here? Why don't you come down. And then Mary carlet? Is she here? What about Margaret

[6:31:53 PM]

brookeshire? All right, sir, you have one minute.

>> Hi, council and mayor. I'm --

>> Mayor Adler: Please introduce yourself.

>> Immigrant west, a member of the Austin

[indiscernible] Of America. I don't know what Austin is about. They never lost control of the city like people -- the most powerless people in town are being targeted right now and it's not right. This council righted a wrong in June. It should have never been done and we can't go backward. These ordinances will move the city backward and, you know, it's just not right. So thank you.

[Applause].

>> Mayor Adler: Please introduce yourself.

>> Jackie Bouche, I'm a homeowner and mother and I live in district 5.

[6:32:55 PM]

And this group didn't come here today to cause division or spread fear-mongering and -- spread fear-mongering, and it was never about race. Race has not been mentioned. It's been about the vagrants. And there's a difference between homeless people and vagrants. And it's vagrants that are giving homeless people a bad name. They are the ones causing the problems, they are the ones who are harassing people. I can't walk down slaughter lane for an evening walk and not get harassed by some guy, and mind you it's been three white men who -- different, of course, who have showed their genitals and urinated, asked me if I wanted to go have a good time in the bushes. Me an old lady. This is me. Children walk to and from bus stops and schools. So if they're going to harass me, who I can defend myself, they're going to harass children and whom who can't take care -- and women

[6:33:57 PM]

who can't take care of themselves.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Please introduce yourself?

>> Do I have one minute or three minutes? I don't know.

>> Mayor Adler: What's your name.

>> Kim vonsermelon.

>> Okay. I'll make one point that I think the ordinance is good. I think we shouldn't criminalize people for being homeless, but I'm also very sad about what's happening in our city. I think that the ordinances are very confusing and if I had to say a suggestion to the council that -- I cannot quit thinking about why we can't form legal camp sites? State-of-the-art, legal camp sites. I think every penny the city has should be poured into land and we should start by creating nice places for people to sleep that are protected and where they can get a shower. A lot of homeless are one shower away from getting a

[6:35:00 PM]

job where they could be protected while they sleep and where taxpayers would be happier because people wouldn'ting scattered all over the city. So I like the idea of the city --

[buzzer sounds]

-- Investing in legal camp sites.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[Applause]. Please introduce yourself.

>> Hello. My name is Maggie Brookshire. I am a resident of district 5 and I would like to state that I am in favor of keeping the ordinances as they are. And they were just passed in June, so I believe that with the help of the recently hired homelessness position -- I don't know the exact title, but whoever was tasked with trying to figure out how to address the issue of homelessness in Austin should be given a chance to do their job, and we should have more time to see this play out before we hurriedly

[6:36:01 PM]

react to public dissent for what has already been passed. And I think the city council should not go back on their decision. And should instead, if they focus energies on new ideas, it should be for public housing and not continued criminalization of the homeless. Thank you.

[Applause].

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Is Stewart due Dupree here? What about Mr. Goth?

>> While he's coming down can I ask a quick question please? Are there any organizers for the take Austin back organization here or somebody that can contact my office with their contact information? I'd love to talk to you after, especially because what was addressed was the issue of race. And it's going to keep coming up because it is an issue, but literally there were no black people wearing the take Austin back shirts today. So it's like you asked for it.

[Laughter]. So in the future sort of talk through like a better

[6:37:03 PM]

strategy.

>> They're taxpayers working right now. They're working. What do you expect?

>> Mayor Adler: She asked you to follow up later if you would give her your contact information, that would be great. Before you begin, Mr. Goff, is Elizabeth castelino here? What about liane starkly? You gave it away. I appreciate that. What about Susan orginger? What about Rachel manning? I think she gave up her time. Is Caitlin McClune here? What about Lisa Walsh.

>> I gave up my time.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. What about Debra knew gent? Nugent? Sarah wombot spoke already. What about Jason cox? Okay. Why don't you go ahead, Mr. Goff.

>> My name is Eric Goff and briefly I want to say that I

[6:38:03 PM]

definitely don't want you to roll back any of the ordinance you did. People need to sleep somewhere. And criminalizing basic behavior is just inhuman. I also want to talk about the deconstruction of the sidewalk by the arch that started on Monday. That was announce understand a memo on Friday. It's narrowing the sidewalk, which goes against all of your other sidewalk policies for A.D.A., for great streets. And it seems to be in response to the people that are near the arch. If we solve the homelessness people, reduce it, people aren't there you're going to end up with a terrible sidewalk still. So I really urge you to as quickly as possible stop the deconstruction of that sidewalk. It's a two-week process according to that memo and been going on since Monday. And it just is terrible, terrible thing. We have a shortage of wide sidewalks in the city, and yet the director of the health department decides to tear up one that happens to be where people experiencing homelessness are.

[6:39:03 PM]

[Buzzer sounds] Please don't do that.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you.

[Applause]. Is Seth manetti Dillon here? Why don't you come on down. What about Elizabeth castelino here? That's you. Go ahead, please.

>> Hello, my name is Elizabeth and I live in district 10 so I

[indiscernible]. As a resident of this city I regularly clean up after the homeless in the greenbelt behind the Best Buy and I feed the residents, the foundations communities right across from the state capitol, which we are here where the near homeless population are in efficiencies. So I have a heart for the topic that we are discussing today. And I was at the Mary Moore park last month working with the Austin homeless to clean up after a large fire that occurred in a homeless site at the park. As an environmentalist, I do not support permitting the homeless being permitted to camp in our parks or green space in Austin for several reasons. We could have lost the entire park due to a fire.

[6:40:04 PM]

Living in a parkland means there is trash runoff into our aquifer and pollution is a public safety issue. I support proven initiatives that work, increased mental health services and holistic responses which include partnership with invested people such as community first. I support emergency shelter showers. And you probably know Eddie white --

[buzzer sounds] Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Sir?

>> Hi, my name is Seth. I am in district 3. Former public defender, current private defense attorney. Change is hard. It's difficult. It can be very uncomfortable. And obviously for a lot of people this is uncomfortable. There's no question about that. But that doesn't mean that you pick a new course because three months later all of a sudden, oh, man, I don't like this. There's a lot of people who clearly don't like this. You made the right decision in June when you took these unconstitutional and inhumane ordinances down.

[6:41:05 PM]

And I urge you to stay the course because yes, we can make improvements, we can get more funding, we can improve programs, but to just quit now because it seems uncomfortable? Then we're never going to make positive change. There's going to be a period where things aren't great and things need to improve. But you don't quit and go back to the way it was where we are dehumanizing people because they just need somewhere to sleep. Stay the course, it's going to be difficult, but stay the course. Thank you.

[Applause].

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Has anybody signed up to speak tonight that I have not called? Come on down.

>> Hi, everybody. My name is Nicole Sanford. I live in south Austin. I have been working on a greenbelt in my neighborhood since 2005. I have done lots of park

[6:42:06 PM]

work and I have never seen anybody be totally disrespectful. I have not seen like some people have witnessed, the overt nakedness, but I also know that going to the bathroom is a democratic process. Everybody has to do it. And so my urging is more bathrooms. I applaud you guys for saying camping is okay temporarily. I applaud you guys for taking initiative for that facility that is next to the location south. I forget what the name of it is. I really think that what you've done took a lot of skeleton to say yes to do that.

[Buzzer sounds] And I am absolutely saying keep on the course just like the last person.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you

[6:43:06 PM]

very much.

[Applause].

>> Mayor Adler: Is there anybody else who signed up to speak that I didn't call? Colleagues, here at 6:43, I think that's everybody. Does anybody want to say anything before we close down? We can say that we weren't actually going to do deliberations tonight. We'll pick this back up again on Friday morning at 9:00, see if we can work this through by noon. I think we lose somebody at noon on Friday so that will be the goal. But before we do -- let me recognize first councilmember alter and then councilmember Renteria.

>> Alter: So I just had a logistical comment. One that I think I was the person that arranged this I have a commitment from 12:00 to 130. I want to make sure folks are aware of that when planning on time. And the other thing that I wanted to mention is that I would like us postponing 142, which has to do with the ilo over red river, we

[6:44:08 PM]

only got the ilo at 3:00 P.M. And with this meeting I will not have enough time to review that. I don't think the public is aware that that is on the agenda. And I'd like to know if we can postpone it so I don't have to scramble to do full due diligence on that between now and tomorrow.

>> Mayor Adler: The problem is that we're in a special called meeting on homelessness now. We're not in the work session. So we can't discuss that, but I appreciate that notice that we need to take that to the message board. 142. Mr. Renteria?

>> Renteria: I won't be long. I want to encourage and tell people, listen, if you see something illegally done, just three days ago I was out there driving, riding my bicycle on a trail here on town lake and I saw a person doing a lewd act. And I did not hesitate to call the police. I gave them my name, and when they called me back and they said could we use your

[6:45:09 PM]

name if we press charges? I said yes, you can. My name is Sabino Renteria and you can use my name. And I encourage all of y'all. If you see something illegally being done out there, do not hesitate. And make sure that the officers get your name, and you tell them yes, I am willing to testify against that person. That's the only way that we're going to take care of these kind of problems that was described here in this hall. You have to call the police and be willing to testify against that person because a cop, the police did not see that act done. You are the one that witnessed it, just like I did. And I said I am not afraid to go out there and testify against this person. So please, don't be afraid to call them. Call 911.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Anything else before we stop?

[6:46:09 PM]

Okay. It is 6:45 and this meeting is adjourned. Clears